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(peligones). Lychnidis, the Roman name for the lake of Ochrida, is possibly the Albanian "Licheni," a lake. And the Molotti, or Molossi, may mean mountain men, as does the Albanian Maltsor, from Maltsia mountains. (Usually incorrectly spelt Malessori, an Italianized form, it being against the principles of Italian to put "lt" together.)

The Romans drove the Illyrian tribes into rugged ground. Similarly in North Albania of to-day the tribes owe their continued existence in a great part to the mountains. Conquerors always take the fat lands, leaving the lean to the conquered—if they leave them any. That many descendants of the ancient people survived is shown by the tradition to-day in the mountains that "Latini" or "Pagani" or "Anas" were living on the lands when the ancestors of the present tribes arrived. "Anas" is Albanian for "indigenous."

Roughly speaking, the man who tilled the soil and who herded beasts has been rudely displaced three times on the west side of the Balkan peninsula. (1) By the invading Roman. (2) By the invading Serb. (3) By the invading Turk.

The history of the present tribes is mainly that of the third displacement. Each tribe has a tale of origin. Unfortunately first the Balkan wars of 1912–13 and then the Great War interrupted and ended my work before I had collected them all. I give such details as I gathered.

The Albanian tribe (Fis) descends from one male ancestor (or several). All persons tracing descent from the same male ancestor, no matter how distant, are reckoned "brothers and sisters," and are not intermarriageable. The law of exogamy is most strictly observed. The heads of families know by heart surprisingly long pedigrees—knowledge of great importance, as both marriage and blood vengeance are regulated by consanguinity. We may be certain that groups which will not intermarry have in truth a common male ancestor. Women do not count. The child, I was told, has none of its mother's blood. Whence it follows that tribes which continually intermarry because they have not a common male ancestor are, in fact, often very closely related on the female side, having given daughters to, and taken wives from, each other for generations. But they jeered at me heartily when I suggested this.

Tribal instinct is far stronger than Church law. Many of these exogamous tribes are Catholic. The Catholic Church prohibits the marriage of second cousins—but no further. I asked an Albanian Franciscan, a tribesman himself, how he reconciled this with his strongly expressed opinion that to marry "one's own blood," however remote, was incest. "Suppose some fourth or fifth cousins asked you to marry them, could you, as priest, refuse?" He was much upset.

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the Gruda church was built three hundred and eighty years ago, soon after their arrival. This dates their settlement at the beginning of the sixteenth century—that is, after the Turks had annexed Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The Djell and Berisha stocks are intermarriageable. About half the tribe was Catholic and half Moslem. It is now scattered and partly destroyed. The Powers awarded it to Montenegro in 1913 as a war

FIG. 1.—SKETCH MAP OF ALBANIAN TRIBES IN 1913

prize in spite of the prayers of the people. It was devastated and many refugees fled to Scutari. Again, after the Great War, it was badly handled by the incoming Serbs, who were active against Moslem and Catholic alike. They even tore the rings from the hands of a poor old lady whose only crime was that she was Catholic. I saw many hapless refugees in Scutari in 1921, but was powerless to help them. As in the days of the Turk, a new foe was forcing a shifting of the peoples.

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2. *Hoti.*—A tribe situated south of Gruda and extending to the lake of Scutari. It owned also large winter pastures on the plains by the Boyana, and, as do the other Maltsia e Madhe tribes, descended yearly with great flocks. But in 1913, when both Hoti and Gruda were given by the Powers to Montenegro, the frontier line deprived them of their winter pasture. The gentlemen sent to draw frontiers had their heads full only of "strategy," and would not see that they were condemning a people to die of hunger. Both Gruda and Hoti have been thus ruined.

When I knew the tribe it was all Catholic but three houses—those of the bairaktar, which became Moslem seven generations before, after winning great honour from the Turks in a fight against Dulcigno. Marash Hutzi, the hereditary surgeon of the tribe, a singularly charming and intelligent old man, told me that the ancestor of Hoti, Geg Laz, came from Bosnia, and arrived with all his family shortly after the building of the church of Gruda. On arriving they found people, "Anas," living on the land and settled among them. From these "Anas" twelve houses of Hoti trace descent, and are intermarriageable with the descendants of Geg Laz. From what part of Bosnia they came he could not tell. Geg was head of a large family group of herdsmen which trekked southward, doubtless to escape serfdom under a Moslem overlord. Geg Laz had three brothers: Piper Laz, Vaso Laz, and Krasni Laz. Piper and Vaso, as we shall see, were ancestors of the Piperi and Vasojevitch tribes, which became Montenegrin in the eighteenth century. Krasni was ancestor of the Moslem Albanian tribe Krasnichi. Thus of the four, two are now Serbophone and Orthodox; one Catholic and Albanophone, and the other Moslem and Albanophone.

Hoti, when I knew it, was the leader tribe of Maltsia e Madhe, and had earned this right by valour in war. Hoti's energy in 1878 thwarted the decree of the Berlin Congress and saved Tuzhi and the Plava-Gusinje districts from Montenegro. My poor old friend, Marash Hutzi, told how he, as a young man, had rushed round and summoned Hoti to the rescue, and put such a force on the frontier that Montenegro dared not risk occupying the districts.

Geg Laz had four sons, each of whom became head of a group ("vlaznii"). Marash gave his pedigree as in the table on the page opposite.

In few other lands in Europe can a man give the names of his forbears for three hundred years. Poor Marash, who was one of the best, died of pneumonia during the revolt of the tribes against Turkish rule in 1911. His house and all he owned was burnt. I met him in an exhausted state among the refugees. He smiled and pulled from his breast the two picture postcards I had sent him from London, the only things he had saved from the wreck. I helped him, and he begged

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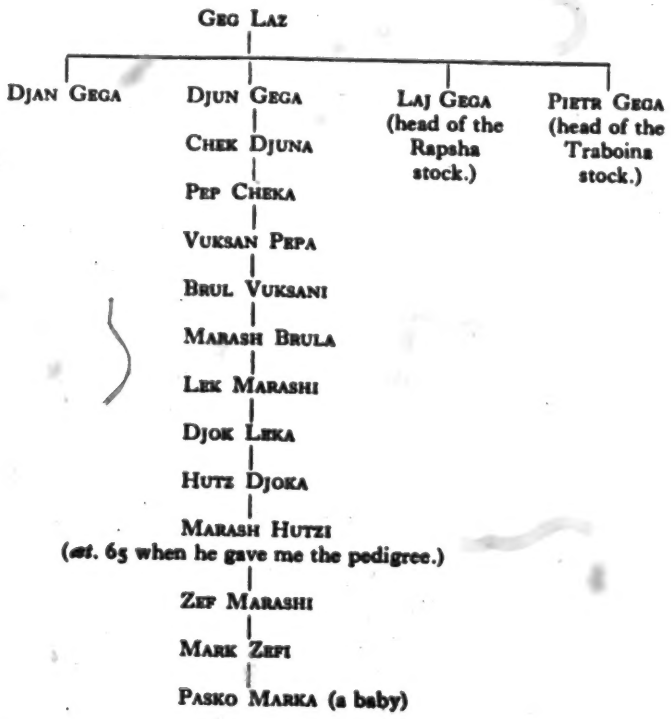
me not to give him more than his share. One of the Franciscans gave him shelter, for he was generally beloved, but he did not survive the winter. I mourned him at the time, but was later glad that he had died before his beloved tribe was handed to the enemy. The name "Hoti" is older than the arrival of Geg Laz. Jirecek, quoting the Venetian archives, states that the Hoti ("montanea Ottanorum") allied itself in 1474 with Ivan Tzrnojevitch and fought the Turks. The "Anas" must then have been numerous.



The tribe of Nikaj (see below) is also related to Hoti. Marash Hutzi said that Nikaj descends from a son of Krasnich. Baron Nopcsa learnt from another quarter that Nik was another brother of Geg Laz. That they are related is clear, for they are not intermarriageable.

Hoti usually marries the neighbour tribe Kastrati. As Kastrati mainly marries Hoti, after so many generations the two must be very closely related. But old Marash was extremely proud of the strict exogamy of the tribe. To marry "one's own blood" he looked on with unspeakable horror. I asked how many generations must pass before the descendants

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619 of Geg Laz would be intermarriageable. He said gravely that there was
582 no knowing what the future would bring. People might learn bad ways from abroad. For his part he hoped that so long as the world lasted Hoti would never marry its own blood.

779 He was very certain that Geg Laz and his family were Catholics. The names in the pedigree indicate that they were Albanophone. Only one, Vuksan, is Slav.

619 3. *Kastrati.*—This consists of some five hundred houses on the
[703 mountains between the Hoti and Skreli tribe lands. The name is
174 probably derived from the Roman fort (*castrum*) which guarded the road round the foot of the lake. "Kastr" as a place-name occurs elsewhere in Albania. The Kastrati were evidently a powerful tribe, for in 1403 we find Alexius Kastrati headman in a list of Albanian chiefs who are rewarded by the Venetians with gifts of cloth. Fine cloth was much coveted by the Albanians and appears often as payment of service.

596 Three hundred houses of Kastrati are of ancient Albanian origin. They trace descent from one Delti, or Dedli, who came with his seven sons from Drekalovitch, a part of the Kuchi tribe. The Drekalovitch trace descent from the Berisha (see below), which is the oldest of the
[197 tribes. When they arrived they found other inhabitants there who are
779 said to have been Slavs, and from whom the other two hundred houses trace descent. All are now Albanophone, and the majority Catholic; the rest Moslem. The groups are intermarriageable.

619 4. *Skreli.*—A tribe of one bairak in the valley of the Proni Thaat,
174 mainly Catholic, stated that it came from Bosnia some three hundred years ago. The name is said to derive from Shen Kerli—St. Carlo,
776 possibly the patron saint of a church which has been destroyed, as they now have St. Nikola of Bari as patron.

619 5. *Klementi*, often called by the Albanians Kilmeni.—A large and
614 widely spread tribe of four bairaks—Seltzi Vukli, Boga, and Nikshi. They are said to descend from the four sons of Kilmeni or Klimenti,
[166 who fled with them vaguely "from the north," about thirteen generations ago. Baron Nopcsa states that they moved from the neighbourhood of Gusinje at the beginning of the seventeenth century and settled at Vukli.
[582 They are recognized as an old tribe by the Albanians. The four bairaks are intermarriageable, it having been decided they were sufficiently far removed by now. But in view of the strong feeling against "marrying one's own blood," in other tribes probably, in spite of the
174 tale, there may be other blood in some of them. It has been said that they were different stems, and were gathered into one tribe by Klimenti, a mission priest. Be this as it may, they are some of the finest and most intelligent of the tribesmen.

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Seltzi—three hundred houses, all Catholic—is at the head of the Tsem valley, a lovely spot. It is divided into Djenovich Seltzi, which forms the majority and traces descent from the reputed ancestor Kilmeni, and the Rabijenovich Seltzi, which is of another stock, and some say is related to a tribe near Rijeka in Montenegro (? Tzrmnitza).

Vukli lies at the other source of the Tsem and consisted of ninety-four families, all Catholic.

Boga is at the head of the Proni Thaat, above Skreli. Seventy-five families, all Catholic. Boga intermarries much with Thethi. Nikshi, one hundred and fifty-four houses, almost all Moslem, lies between Boga and Vukli. All these people winter on the plains near Scutari to feed their flocks. They, too, have suffered much from the new frontier, which was purposely drawn by the Montenegrins so as to cut the road and make their journeys to the plain and town very difficult. Montenegro and the Serbs hoped thus to force Klimenti to fall into their hands, and the authorities sent by the Powers to delimit frontiers were too ignorant of the manner of life of the people to see into the matter. So-called "strategical" frontiers, drawn heedless of economic needs, are more likely to promote war than to prevent it.

6. *Lohe*, or Lohja, a small tribe of one bairak, consisting of eighty Moslem and forty Catholic houses. Of mixed descent from Shlaku and Pulati. Probably families flowed down into this more fertile district not far from the lake when Serb rule broke up, for "Loho" and its mills are mentioned in 1348 by Stefan Dushan among the districts which are given to the Church.

7. *Rechi*, a small Moslem tribe, gives same tale of origin as Lohja; and has also a few houses of "Anas."

8. *Rioli*, on the river, obviously takes its name from *rivulus*, another memento of Roman days. It is all Catholic. The cloth-fulling mills still clack on the river, and perhaps stand in the same place as some of those given away by Dushan. Like Rechi-Lohja, it is of mixed descent. These eight tribes form the Maltsia e Madhe group.

There are also on the shores of the lake two small Moslem tribes, Kopliku and Grizha. Kopliku as "Kopelnik" is also one of the places mentioned in Tsar Dushan's list. Between Kopliku and Scutari is the only Serb village of the whole district, Vraka, which derives its name from the Saints Vrachi: The Healers, SS. Cosmo and Damian, to whom the church was dedicated. Vraka had a thousand inhabitants, who all trace descent from various Bosnians, Herzegovinese, and Montenegrins, who in recent times fled from blood-vengeance and sheltered in Turkish territory. Far from being grateful for shelter they are a perpetual source of trouble. They are used by the Serbs as a "jumping-off ground" for complaints, and though they have their own Church

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includes five districts or parishes, Sciossi, Kiri, Planti, and Givagni, that the territory of Shala is also in Pulati, and that "in it are the vestiges of an ancient city called Mauricum and the remains of seventeen sacred edifices, of which one was said to have belonged to the Benedictines." Mention is also made of the tribes of Salza (now Seltzi), Toplana, and Duscman (Dushmani), all of which still exist, and of "Blachia," not now identifiable. All the above-mentioned, we are told, "faithfully cultivate the Catholic faith. Like the Klementi and others of the mountain folk, they are free from Turkish servitude and free from all Turkish taxes." We thus see clearly that under their own clergy they occupied the same position as did Montenegro under its clergy. The popular tale that Montenegro alone resisted absorption by the Turk is not true.

The Montenegrin tribes, owing to the continuous support of Russia, however, obtained recognition, and were enabled to establish a ruling family, whereas the Albanian tribes, divided into several dioceses and with no leading Albanian family, did not succeed in forming an organic whole.

Pulati is difficult to define, as the limits of the diocese of Pulati extend farther than the district called Pulati by the people. Lower Pulati includes four tribes:—

1. *Plani.*—A Catholic tribe of one bairak, and consists of three stocks, which are intermarriageable and trace descent from Klementi, Merturi, and from the "Anas" (ancient population).

2. *Ghoanni.*—A small Catholic tribe of whose origin I have no information. The Bishop of Pulati has his humble residence in this tribe land.

3. *Mgula.*—Also a small Catholic tribe.

4. *Kiri* traces descent from two stocks—one from Kuchi, the other from Ipek. It is Catholic.

The other tribes of the diocese of Pulati, in what is called Upper Pulati, are:—

1. *Shala.*—A large tribe which played much part in Albania's struggle for independence, occupies all the upper part of the valley of the river Shala, and reaches to the summits of the mountains, which form the watershed on either side. Shala consists of four bairaks which all descend from a common ancestor. Shala, Shoshi, and part of Mirdita tell that they descend from three brothers, who fled from eastward, presumably from Kosovo, when it was overrun by the Turks some time in the fifteenth century. One had a saddle ("shala" in Albanian); the second a winnowing sieve ("shoshi"), and the third had nothing, so he said "Mir dit" (Good day) and went off. Shala, Shoshi, and three bairaks of Mirdita, being thus consanguineous, do not intermarry. Shala tells that when its ancestor arrived there were already small,

dark people inhabiting the land, with whom they intermarried. Eight houses near Abate, in lower Shala, trace descent from these old inhabitants. The rest of them migrated to Dechani. The Albanians I saw at Dechani in 1903 were certainly all of the small dark type.

Shala consists of four bairaks: Thethi, Petsaj, Lothaj, and Lekaj. The three latter are said to have separated into three groups 376 years ago (told me in 1908). Lothaj and Lekaj recently decided they were far enough removed to be intermarriageable. But Shoshi and Mirdita still would not marry with them.

The bairak of Thethi consists of 180 houses. In these mountains a "house" is far more numerous than in the Maltsia e Madhe. Large communal "houses" still exist, of as many as thirty or forty persons. Thethi is self-governing, and, in fact, is practically a separate tribe. It clings strongly to exogamy, and does not intermarry at all within the tribe, nor does Petsaj. Thethi marries almost entirely with Boga, and this, continued through many generations, has made the Thethi differ somewhat in physical type from the rest of Shala.

2. *Shoshi.*—Origin as above. It lies south of Shala, on the right bank of Shala river. The rock of Lek Dukagin is in Shoshi territory. Shala and Shoshi reckon themselves as "Dukagini," former subjects, that is, of the now extinct chieftain family of Dukagin. Shoshi and Shala are entirely Catholic.

3. *Toplana.*—This was a very wild tribe and had the highest record for blood-vengeance of all the Christian tribes. It is situated in very rugged mountains difficult of access. Toplana told me it was "very old." Baron Nopcsa traced pedigrees to 1450, and considers that about that time it came in to its present site from Vasojevitch. Vasojevitch is known to have shifted its ground from somewhere near Focha in the Herzegovina to Medun, near Podgoritza, and thence to its present site. In one of these shifts it probably drove Toplana out.

The whole district occupied by the above seven tribes is often called Maltsia e Vogel, the little mountains. Also included in the diocese of Pulati is:—

4. *Nikaj.*—Here I was told that the tribe is mainly an offshoot from the Moslem tribe of Krasnichi, which, as we have seen, is brother to Hoti. Nikol, the ancestor, left Krasnichi while that tribe was still Christian, and Nikaj is all Catholic. One hundred houses of Nikaj, the Tsuraj, trace descent from a daughter of Nikol, who bore an illegitimate child by a cut-eared gipsy ("tsurrue," to cut or mark the ears). This is the only case of female descent I heard of. The cut ear suggests that the gipsy had been mutilated as a punishment and had fled to the mountains. The Nikaj people are dark and are a wild lot. Gipsy blood is possible.

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The Tribes of Albania and Montenegro

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Baron Nopcsa considers the ancestor Nikol to have been brother and not son to Krasan.

THE PUKA GROUP

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This is sometimes reckoned a large tribe of seven bairaks. Sometimes as a group of tribes.

It is an important group, as here are the oldest of all the population. Much is probably of indigenous origin with little immigration.

1. *Berisha-Merturi.*—The Berisha people state that they have always been in their present homeland. They formerly, says Nopcsa, occupied more, but were driven from Ibalja by the Thachi. With great p[illegible]nce the Baron traced some very extensive pedigrees with certainty back to 1370, and with probability to 1270, an extraordinarily detailed piece of oral tradition. Merturi split off from Berisha eleven generations ago. Even in the days when the district was included in the Serb Empire we find no Slav names in these pedigrees, and only two, Sokol (falcon) and Uk (wolf), occur later. As above mentioned, both Gruda and Kuchi also trace descent in part from Berisha. I would particularly direct ethnologists to this region before it is penetrated and broken up by roads.

Merturi, I was told, was an ancient Roman name "Merituri," but I have not traced it. That the Romans had a route through the district is shown by the place-names "Valbona" and "Apripa." Berisha-Merturi is all Catholic.

2. *Cheriti.*—Part Catholic, part Moslem. These people also stated [779] that they were "very old," but I have no particulars.

3. *Komani.*—Catholic. In this tribe land are the ruins and the ancient graveyard known as Kalja Dalmaches, or tower of the Dalmatians, which is generally considered to be the remains of the Illyrian tribe of the Delmates or Dalmates, driven from the coast by the Romans. The present inhabitants seem to have no tradition of descent from these people, and no tradition, in fact, about them at all, so are clearly later immigrants.

The name Komani occurs also for a district in Montenegro, not far from Podgoritza. One is tempted to connect it with the Cumans or Komans, who were used as hired troops by various Balkan rulers, especially the Bulgars, in the Middle Ages. But we have no definite tale of their movements.

4. *Chiri.*—All Catholic.

5. *Dushaj.*—Catholic.

6. *Kabashi.*—Moslem. Nopcsa reports they came about 250 years ago to their present site.

7. *Puka.*—All Moslem.

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Some Tribal Origins, Laws, and Customs of the Balkans

THE POSTRIPA GROUP

619 175 Postripa is obviously a name bequeathed by the Romans. It consists of five tribes, all included in the Diocese of Pulati. Much of Postripa is Moslem, for it was quarrelled about by several bishops. In 1702 Pope Clement XI, who was of Albanian blood on his mother's side, sent Vicentius Zmajevitch as Visitator Apostolicus, who reported among other lamentable things that three bishops were all claiming Postripa, and that meanwhile the people are left "without leader or shepherd, like a scattered flock subject to oppression and persecution."

In Postripa are included five tribes:—

619 175 614 1. *Mazreku.*—A small Catholic tribe. That the place was in ancient days a centre of civilization is shown by the considerable ruins of an abbey, Shenkol Shati, believed to have belonged to the Benedictines and to be the one mentioned by several ancient writers as not far from Scutari. It is now lost in a tangle of trees and brushwood. There is [784] a strong feeling throughout Albania against felling trees on the spot where a church once existed—a feeling that probably goes back to the very ancient days of sacred groves. The abbey presumably fell into ruin when the Serbs seized the district in the Middle Ages. The hatred [798] of the Serb Orthodox for the Catholics was shown in 1913 in the Balkan War, when the Montenegrin troops, whose object was said to be "to liberate Christians," fell upon the little church of Mazreku, trampled the Host under foot, dressed up in the priestly vestments, danced about, and amused themselves by cutting off the noses from images of the saints and firing bullets into the crucifix.

2. *Drishti.*—A small Moslem tribe that was almost annihilated in 1913 by the Montenegrins. Drishti is the site of the ancient city of Drivasto, in ancient days a bishopric, mentioned as early as 877. The town was entirely destroyed by the Turks, who beheaded the leaders before the walls of Scutari—then too besieged—in order to terrify the Scutarines into submission. The wasted spot was afterwards settled by incomers from the neighbourhood of mixed origin. And in the period when three bishops were quarrelling for Postripa the Drishti folk all turned Moslem.

3. *Shlaku.*—A tribe of one bairak on the right bank of the Drin, in a [775] very poor district. It is all Catholic and traces origin from Toplana (*q.v.*).

4. *Dushmani.*—A Catholic tribe of two bairaks—Temali and Dushmani. Dushmani takes its name from a chieftain family which ruled here. In 1403 "Goranimus, Damianus, and Nenada, brothers Dusmani, Lords of Polati Minor," offer themselves as subjects to Venice and swear fidelity on condition that Venice will guarantee them in possession

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of their lands, which have been attacked by the Turks. Venice, assured of their "fame, probity, and virtues," confirms them in possession of their farms, goods, and all things in the said districts. Venice, in truth, was glad of any tribe that would be a buffer between the Turks and Scutari. The tribe was, I was told, "very old." It numbered 160 houses when I was there.

5. *Summa.*—A mainly Catholic tribe on the right bank of the Kiri. The name occurs in a document of Tsar Dushan, who in 1335 gives to the monastery of Dechani, among other districts, "the Albanian Katun, Tuzi," along with a number of luckless Albanians who are named; "Petrus Suma, Mataguzh (the village of Matagushi was burnt by the Montenegrins in 1912) with his brothers Laz and Prijezda . . . Progon Mira, Marcus Suma, etc." The present Suma tribe states that it comes from Mirdita. But as the Mirdites do not seem to have arrived till early in the fifteenth century, the "Suma" referred to in 1335 must be the elder population. All the above tribes are included in the diocese of Pulati.

THE MIRDITE GROUP

The Mirdite tribe is the largest of all. It is wholly Catholic. When I was there (1908) it was reckoned as some three thousand houses with an average of ten to a house. It had then an ecclesiastical head—the mitred abbot, Premi Dochi, whose title was derived from a Benedictine abbey, which existed near Oroshi formerly.

It had an hereditary chief, Prenk, son of Bib Doda. The abbot was one of the most remarkable men Albania has produced. His death, near the close of the Great War, has been an irreparable loss; and the death of Prenk Bib Doda, who was killed in a blood feud soon after, deprived the Mirdites of, at any rate, a picturesque figurehead. He left no son, and his next heir, a cousin, Mark Ghoni, displayed such cowardice in 1914, when he fled from the front and said he had come "to fetch vaseline to clean the rifles," that he lost all chance of chieftainship. Poor old Prenk realized that the days of chiefs were passed, and left his property to the Mirdite tribe and not to his relatives, for none, he said, were worthy of leadership. Thus ended the quasi-independence of Mirdita. The tribe consists of five bairaks. The three original ones, Oroshi, Spachi, and Kusneni, trace origin from the brother of the Shala-Shoshi brethren who said "Mir dit" and went off. Being consanguineous, these three bairaks do not intermarry, nor do they marry Shala or Shoshi. The two other bairaks are Fandi, which tells that it formerly was part of the Luria group, but joined the Mirdites when Ljuma turned Moslem (? eighteenth century), and Dibri, which

173 582 must not be confounded with the town of Dibra, and of which I have no information. Both these two bairaks can marry the former three.

173 166 I was told by members of the groups that the Mirdite-Shala-Shoshi came from the Pestriku mountains, near Djakova, when the Turks were first pressing westward. Before this emigration they had formed part of the Ipek group of tribes and were all Christian. (There is some reason to believe that at one time the Mirdites were Orthodox.) They further stated that when the Turks took Scutari and were harrying the land they fled back for a time to their old Pestriku mountains, and only returned to their present position some 259 years ago. The name "Mirdite" is of late occurrence—about the middle of the seventeenth century. It is possible that before their second shifting they were known only as Dukagini. Of Lek Dukagin they are extremely proud, and state that the Bijelopavlitchi (sons of White Paul) in Montenegro are de- 292 scended from his nephew, Pal i bardhe (Paul the White). They declared 765 Skender Beg to have been related to him, and for this reason the Mirdite women wear the black giurdan in mourning for him, worn otherwise only by men.

614 582 These three bairaks, Orosho, Spachi, and Kusneni, marry principally with Kthela and Luria.

KTHELA

701 614 619 In war Kthela marches with Mirdita. These two had the right to lead the tribes to all wars in the South. Hoti led to all wars in the North. Kthela consists of three bairaks: Kthela, all Catholic; Selati and Perlati, mixed Catholic and Moslem.

4. The Wholly Moslem Tribes

619 779 186 These lie for the most part east of the Christian groups, on the more fertile and lower-lying lands. They were reluctant to admit foreigners and averse to being questioned. Since I visited them they have been largely exterminated by the Serbs and Montenegrins, and how much is left of their former strength and number is unknown.

DIBRA GROUP

619 614 779 582 1. *Luria.*—Was the head of the group and consisted of one bairak of some two hundred houses, in twenty of which there were some Catholics. In 1908 Mohammedanism was making rapid progress. When Christian, which it was till recently, it married as a rule with

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Mirdita. Since adopting Islam it has married into the two other Moslem tribes of the group, Matija and Dibra.

2. *Matija* is wholly Moslem. It had a very bad reputation when I was travelling in Albania, and was so much averse to foreigners that I did not visit it. It was about the only tribe that refused to accept blood-gelt and insisted on blood, and the more civilized tribes of Maltsia e Madhe used to say: "We are not so bad as Matija." It was notorious for constant cattle-stealing from the herds wintering on the plains and was said to consist of about twelve hundred houses. It has since come before the public, as its chief, Ahmed Zogu, with a large number of armed men at his back, aspired to rule Albania. He was expelled by the Albanians in 1924, but was returned forcibly to the country by the support of Belgrade, and it is said of other Powers, who saw in him a ready tool to assist their schemes. By first giving territory to the Serbs and then great concessions to Italy he has now put Albania into a difficulty, and she has become a bone of contention between Jugoslavia and Italy. In 1908, when all the tribes were eager for an independent Albania, no one could have foreseen its destinies would be thrown into the hands of the wildest and least educated of the tribes.

3. *Dibra.*—This tribe, too, I found unvisitable. It had as bad a reputation as Matija, but has suffered cruelly as a result of war, for the frontier has been drawn between the Dibrani and the town of Dibra, their market. This has caused great discontent both sides of the frontier, and some fighting. A frontier under no circumstances should cut a tribe land in half—if those who draw it wish to maintain peace.

Dibra and Matija formed part of the Principality of Skender Beg in the old days. Luria belonged to Dukagini.

4. *Arnji.*—A small independent tribe on the left bank of the river Mola. It is all Moslem and an offshoot of Berisha. I was the only foreigner who had passed through it for many years, and a long debate was held before I was admitted as guest. The women all wore Mirdite dress, and I was told the tribe married mainly Mirdite women.

PRIZREN GROUP

1. *Ljuma.*—When I knew it, this was a large and strong Moslem tribe. In 1912–13 it suffered very heavily. A Serb officer in my presence described how he and his battalion had bayoneted all the women and children in part of the tribe, because "women bear men," and laughed till he choked over his beer. The Serbs were "liberating the land from the Turkish yoke." On subsequent inquiry I learnt that some 1,400 persons had been massacred. Part of this tribe is now under Serb rule.

2: Durham B-5 (ca. 1910)1928 EG1 Albania EG1

614 Along with Ljuma were grouped Bruti, Mal i zi (the Black Mountain, not to be confounded with Montenegro), Rechi, Vlas, and some other small groups—all offshoots of older tribes, especially of Shala and the Fandi bairak of Mirdita.

DJAKOVA GROUP

614 619 779 1. *Gashi.*—All Moslem. About eight hundred houses. I did not visit it.

2. *Hashi.*—A very large tribe of, it was said, about a thousand houses, almost all Moslem. They had never seen a woman in European dress, and were greatly amused at my arrival armed only with an umbrella. They occupy the Pestriku mountains, traditionally a former home of the Mirdites. They were hospitable and allowed me to pass through their land, but were so unused to foreigners and so afraid that their admission might bring about foreign annexation that I asked no questions about origin or anything personal.

103 173 3. *Tropopoja.*—Three hundred Moslem houses—I did not visit. The town of Djakova was founded by an offshoot of the Merturi-Berisha, and I was told derives its name from St. Jak (St. Giacomo), and that its founders were Christians. But when I visited it almost the whole of its large population was Moslem. There was a small Catholic church and school. Except for one hundred Serb families the town was solid Albanian. Two stocks claimed descent from the original founders: the Merturi and the Vula. The Vula was a large and powerful family, and I was told I could travel anywhere safely with a Vula as guide. I did so. He carried no weapon.

A large number of villages surround Djakova. These I found to be all Albanian, tracing descent from Berisha, Shala, Fandi, and other bairaks of Mirdita, as do many inhabitants of the town. None intermarry with their tribe of origin. The villages were mixed Catholic and Moslem. There were no Serb villages. The district is now part of Jugoslavia, and the population doubtless much changed by immigration and emigration.

IPEK GROUP

614 619 173 1. *Ipek* (now called Petch) and its villages.—A large Albanian population of many stocks flowed down from the mountains when the Serbs evacuated it in 1640 and reoccupied the lands formerly taken from their ancestors.

Some villages traced origin from Berisha and Shala. Dechani was populated by descendants of the ancient Shala stock (*q.v.*). This

2: Durham B-5 (ca. 1910)1928 EG1 Albania EG1

district, too, is now part of Jugoslavia, and has suffered much at the hands of Serb and Montenegrin. The lands are being colonized by Serbs. Many Albanians have fled into Albania.

2. *Gusinje.*—This, in all probability, descends from some of the last of the Bosniaks who trekked south. Though largely Serbophone, the pre-war Gusinjans were so violently anti-Serb that when the Treaty of Berlin awarded them to Montenegro they resisted annexation so fiercely that the plan was dropped. Terrible vengeance was taken for this by the Montenegrins in 1913 and the Serbs in 1919. Men, women, and children were mercilessly slaughtered. Some thousands fled to Scutari for protection. A British force was there then. So greatly had these refugees suffered that they preferred to die of fever in the Scutari swamps to returning to Gusinje, where, as they said, the Serbs had thrown down food to attract a crowd of hungry children and had then thrown a bomb into the midst of them.

But the Powers permitted the Serbs to keep the district. The advent of the Serb has, in fact, reproduced the conditions of the Middle Ages, when the Turks advanced. I note the facts in order to enable an observer fifty or more years hence to learn how much of an original population is wiped out or absorbed by a conqueror.

3. *Plava.*—I did not visit, as it was opposed to admitting strangers. I was told by old Marash Hutzi, of Hoti, that part of Plava derived from Hoti, but that part was of very old stock called Pagani; but he did not know if Pagani were Moslems or Catholics. "Pagani," or "Paganezi," occurs as a proper name in some Durazzo and Ragusa documents of the thirteenth century. Possibly it was a usual term for "country people" among those of the coast and the towns who spoke a Latin dialect. The "Pagani" of Plava may be an "island" of an ancient population, e.g. Vlah.

To sum up briefly, the present tribes of Albania are in all probability mainly descended from the pre-Slav Balkan inhabitants. In the Serb Empire the herdsmen were recognized as Vlah and Albanian. A very large proportion of the Albanian mountains were, as we have seen, given along with their inhabitants to Serbian monasteries. Under Turkish rule the power of the monasteries naturally dwindled rapidly, and the Albanian serfs, more especially as they were largely, if not entirely, Catholic, would as rapidly break loose from servitude.

That the refugees who came into these mountains later were also of the herdsman class there is little reason to doubt. They came with their flocks, and are to this day strictly pastoral.

As we shall see in studying the Montenegrin tribes, the ultimate fate of these refugees has been largely influenced by whether they settled in land which was under the Orthodox Church, or whether

Epirus

THE southern part of the Kingdom of Albania of today was the ancient Epirus. This territory was bounded on the north by the Ionian Sea and on the south by the Ambracian Gulf. Its landward sides were next to Illyria, Macedonia and Thessaly. The terrain is essentially mountainous. About the fourth century before Christ these Epirots were divided in fourteen tribes. Epirus at this time exerted no small influence on Thessaly through the oracle of Dodona. Historically, the part of Epirus was passive. Epirus was divided into the smaller kingdoms of Molossia, Thesprotia, Chaonia, etc., which were formed into an Epirotic League.

The chieftains of Molossia, who dominated all Epirus, claimed to be descended from Pyrrhus, son of Achilles, who settled in the country after the fall of Troy. (Plutarch also relates that Achilles was known in this country under the name of "Aspetos" which in Albanian means "swift.") Upon Pyrrhus' death his kingdom was transmitted to Molossus, his son by Andromache.

AN INTIMATE GLIMPSE INTO ALBANIA

361 lowed into them and is to be found in no other place in Europe.

These little hamlets are constant sources of surprise with their old traditions, native [619] songs and legends. In the more distant fastnesses of the mountains, the natives live in tribes as their ancestors did before them, generations ago, each tribe having distinctive ornaments for their costumes. There are hundreds of small farms scattered throughout the mountains; some in the valleys, others clinging to the side of a mountain, and still others perched on the summit of the lower knolls and even a few on the rocky heights. Their implements and methods are of the simplest 312 variety. Irrigation is their chief way of watering their fields, for water is plentiful. This delicious, cold, spring water has many sources in the heart of the mountains and is inexhaustible. The natives dig small channels, and where necessary, they make troughs for the water and lead it in zig-zag fashion down the mountain-side to their farms. There is nothing more refreshing nor cooling than this icy-cold fountain that Mother Nature has given the Albanians.

000 Albania is also a seat of historic interest,

6: Lane
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EG1 Albania EG1

/For an account of inter-tribal agreements following the March 1922 rebellion, staged by the mountain Ghegs in Tirana and Durazzo against the newly formed Albanian Toshk Government, see category 116, pp. 333-335./

PEAKS OF SHALA

000 583 God. It was not strange that what I had heard of the marriage customs had baffled me, he said; I should not look for traces of marriage by capture or marriage by purchase; the basis of the tribal ceremonies is fire worship.

585 593 On the day of the wedding the bride, elaborately dressed, is carried, screaming and struggling, from her father's house, and by her brothers is delivered to the husband's family at a place midway between the lands of the two [582] tribes. Since each tribe is technically a large [619] family, claiming a common prehistoric ancestor, it is forbidden to marry within the tribe. The bride carries with her from her home one invariable gift—a pair of fire tongs. When she arrives at her husband's house she takes a humble place in the corner, standing, her hands folded on her breast, her eyes downcast, and for three days and nights she is required to remain in that position, without lifting her eyes, without moving, and without eating or drinking.

"Though I believe," said the bishop, smiling, "that she takes the precaution of hiding some food and drink in her garments, and no doubt the mother-in-law sees that she is allowed to rest a little while the household is asleep." And he explained that this custom remains from the old days when the father of each house was also the priestly guardian of the fire, and anyone coming to ask for a light from it stood reverently in that position, silent, before the hearth, until the father priest gave it to him. The bride, new-

1 [Bishop of Pultit -- Analyst]

PEAKS OF SHALA

ooo room, furnished by a mattress laid on a raised platform of boards. Our saddlebags and blankets had been piled on the rough wooden floor, and Rexh held the torch while the bishop's servant poured cold water from a wooden bucket over our hands. Then he offered us a beautifully hand-woven towel of red-and-white striped linen, and when we had dried our hands he led us down a stone stairway, through a kitchen crowded with villagers, where an old woman tended cooking pots over a fire built on the earthen floor, and into the dining room.

There was a long, rude table covered with hand-woven linen, rough benches on each side of it. The bishop sat at its head, on a stool, and served the soup. The Franciscan brother and a meek little priest in black sat humbly near the foot of the table, and did not speak. There was nothing in the stone-floored, plaster-walled room except the table, the benches, and a rain-stained photograph on the discolored wall—a picture of a gathering of Albanian priests, taken many years ago in Tirana.

628 619 "The feud between Shala and Shoshi[1] looks very bad," said the bishop[2] "I fear there will be many deaths. We do what we can to prevent it, all the authority of the Church is used against these feuds, but——" He shrugged his shoulders. "It is their way of enforcing their law, the Law of Lec, which has come down to them from prehistoric times. And the Albanians are very tenacious of their own customs."

1 [Albanian Mountain tribes -- [28] Analyst]
2 [Bishop of Pultit -- Analyst]

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PEAKS OF SHALA

He filled our glasses with red wine. "You must not mistake my people," he said. "The blood feud is bad, very bad, but it is their only way of enforcing laws, which are, in general, admirable.

"The blood feud is not a lawless thing, as strangers sometimes think. Nor has it anything to do with personal strife or hate. It is a form of capital punishment, such as all nations have, and it is governed by most strict laws.

"You must remember that in these mountains we have never been conquered by foreign governments. The Roman Empire claimed to have overpowered Albania, it is true, as later the Turks did, but neither Rome nor Constantinople was able to send its government into these mountains. The people live as they did before the days of Greece, except for the influence of the Church. It is a simple, communistic society, without private property or any organized government. The only law is the moral law, enforced by tradition, by custom, and by common consent. The father of the family becomes the chief of the tribe, but he has no power that conflicts with the moral law, the ancient Law of Lec. There is a tradition that all this group of tribes was once, long ago, given this moral law by a man named Lec, but that is doubtless a myth added to through the ages.

"This Law of Lec is based on personal honor, which is also the honor of the tribe. A man or a tribe must punish an insult to honor by killing

628 the man who has given it. Thus, if a member of
619 a tribe is killed unjustly by a man of another
tribe; if a woman is stolen or injured or affronted;
if any part of the tribal property is stolen; if a
man or a tribe fails to keep a *besa* (a word of
honor) in a matter of land or war or marriage or
[312] irrigation—you will find excellent and admirable
irrigation systems here—then the crime is pun-
ished by death. But if these crimes are com-
mitted against a member of the same tribe, then
the house of the guilty man is burned, and he is
cast off by the tribe and must go into the wilder-
ness and live alone.

"You will see this law working out in the case of Shala and Shoshi. Last week a Shala man crossing the lands of Shoshi—the two tribes having some time ago sworn a *besa* that they would keep the peace between them—saw a woman of Shoshi on the trail. He said to himself that he would like that woman for his son, who was unmarried, though of marriageable age, because his betrothed had died in childhood. So the man of Shala took the woman of Shoshi to his house for his son, and there she is now.

"Apparently," said the bishop, dryly, "she did not make any outcry, for her husband was in their house only a few yards away, and it is a question whether she and the son had not previously arranged the abduction. However, the husband was, of course, obliged to avenge his honor, and he went at once to the heights above Shala and shot the son. This was, according to

PEAKS OF SHALA

the Law, an unjustifiable murder, since he should have killed the father who was the abductor. Therefore the father waited on the trail above Shoshi and shot the husband.

"It should have stopped there, but Shoshi's honor is involved as long as a woman of the tribe is held unlawfully in the hands of Shala. So a hot-tempered Shoshi man has shot a man of Shala and it has become a blood feud between the two tribes. As the woman was born in Pultit, some say that Pultit's honor is also involved. So you see that the affair becomes complicated; I have been told by wise men that no less than sixteen deaths will wipe out the insults on both sides. You perhaps heard telephoning about it as you came in? The mountain sides have been ringing with it. But what can one do? Excommunication, of course. At every mass I tell my people that the anger of the Church will descend on all who take part in the killings, but the Law of Lec holds them, and it is, after all, their only civil law."

It took time to tell this, what with filling the glasses, serving the food platters of delicious stewed rabbit and bowls of macaroni, a dish the bishop had grown fond of in Rome—and then there were the cups of syrupy Turkish coffee to be ceremoniously served and drunk, and for hours, struggling with an agony of sleepiness, we had implored Perolli in English to make our excuses and let us go to bed, he refusing sternly, since it is the most terrible breach of mountain hospitality for a guest to grow sleepy as early as midnight,

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forever to the little feet that brought you to○○○ Thethis!"

The little feet were wearing at that moment two pairs of wrinkled, thick woolen stockings, indescribably ludicrous beneath the flapping legs of trousers around which I had not rewound the soaked woolen leggings, and Perolli and I were helpless with laughter as soon as the door had closed behind Lulash.

"How am I ever going to get to his house?" I asked, wiping my eyes.

"Oh, we'll have somebody make you some goatskin opangi," said Perolli. "He won't expect us very soon." He flung out his arms in a jubilant gesture. "A *besa* of peace from Shala!" he exclaimed. "I couldn't have hoped for that! It means peace through the whole north; it means internal security for northern Albania—if I can only get the other tribes to join it."

Frances and Alex came in, desperately anxious to know what had happened, and we three did a dance of pure delight. It was an inexpressible relief to know that Perolli would get out of Shala alive, and the *besa* was almost too much.

"But, Perolli," said Frances, when I had told 837
the whole conversation, "do you mean to say 628
that these people are—are absolutely moral? I 619
mean, as we understand morality? No love making along all these mountain trails? No illegitimate children? Never?"

"Never? Well, I have heard of one case," said Perolli. "But don't forget that such a

837 628 619 thing would mean a blood feud between tribes. No man would make love to a girl of his own tribe, of course; a tribe traces its ancestry back to a common ancestor, and it would be like an American's making love to his own sister. And if he seduced a girl of another tribe he would be involving hundreds of people. Men have to respect women in these mountains; they're killed if they don't, and not only they, but their families. A blood feud is no joke.

"However, I did hear of its happening once. The man's family had to send word to the family of the girl to whom he was betrothed, to say that he could not marry her because he was going to have a child by another woman. The three tribes met in council and prevented a blood feud, but the man's family had to pay his fiancée's tribe ten thousand kronen, and ten thousand kronen to the family of the man that the other girl was engaged to. Then those two married, and the first man married the girl who was going to have his child. But it was a terrible disgrace to both their families.

But he cut short our awed admiration for such a rigidly moral community. He was a man of Ipek, educated in Europe, and returned to Tirana, and his attitude to the ignorant tribes of these mountains was not one of admiration.

584 627 "They are really a wretched lot," he declared. "Now, take a thing like this, for instance." And he told us that in a house a few miles down the valley there was a nine-year-old girl held prisoner. The story was this:

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pile of folded blankets before the fire, not yet sure that I was not dreaming and that the strange chests and stranger figures of turbaned men and barbarically dressed barefooted women would not vanish when I awoke.

"I did not think," said Lulash, "that any of our houses would be as fine as an American house." He was so pleased that his hand quivered a little on the long handle of the tiny brass pot in which he was making the coffee. So I told them that only our finest houses are of stone, that my house was of wood, and much smaller than his. But all our houses had windows, I said.

"Yes," said Lulash, wistfully "Windows are very good; I always wish that all our houses had windows. But first we must have a *besa* of peace among all the tribes; it is not safe now to have windows, a man never knows when his tribe will be 'in blood' and enemies will shoot him through windows. You see that mine are so placed that it would be difficult to shoot through them, and I have heavy shutters for closing them at night, when the firelight makes it easier to see us from outside."

But he was pleased that I praised his windows; he had gone through many other tribes and down into Scutari to bring up the glass of which he had heard, and made them with his own hands. They were on leather hinges so that they would open and let in the air; he said he had observed that sunshine and air were good things.

342 and, if good outdoors, why not good in houses?
619 "But it will be a long time before my people can have windows," he said, sadly.

He did not think it was good to keep the sheep and goats with the family, either; all his flocks were driven at night into their own quarters, on the lower floor of the house.

000 Houses are the most endless subject in the world; all of humanity and its history is expressed in houses, and while the coffee cup was passed back and forth I told about American houses; about the log cabins of the pioneers, such a little time ago as crude as those of the Albanians; about the loophole glassless windows, and the pegs on which rifles were hung; and about farmers' houses in New England, where the cattle live under the same roof, at the end of long sheds; and suburban houses with gardens, and apartment houses where whole tribes of people live, going up and down in movable rooms. And then I spoke about water power and said that it became electricity—Lulash asked me eagerly how it was done, but I did not know—and that brought us to the whole subject of machinery. I drew a picture of a spinning wheel for them and explained it, but they said it would not be practicable on the trails, where the women did most of the spinning; a woman could not carry her baby in its cradle and a spinning wheel, too; the spindle was better; and I agreed with them. But if men and women did not work so hard carrying water from the springs, they would

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CHAPTER X

THE WATER ORA OF MALI SHARIT—THE COMING OF THE TRIBES TO EUROPE BEFORE THE SEAS WERE BORN, AND HOW THE FIRST GREEKS CAME IN BOATS—WHY ALEXANDER THE GREAT WAS BORN IN EMADHIJA, AND OF HIS JOURNEY TO MACEDONIA—THE SAD HOUSE OF KOL MARKU.

"THE water ora were an ancient race," said the old man. "They were here before the ora of the forests. I do not think there are very many of them left, and no man has seen them in my time, nor in the time of my father. But very long ago, before the tribes of Shala, Shoshi, and Pultit were founded by the three brothers from the land that is now the Merdite country, there was a man of their tribe who caught a water ora. It is a very old song, and much of it has been forgotten, but the man was a man from the Mali Sharit, and by three days he missed becoming the king of the world. In my father's time the thing that happened to him was still sung. I heard that song when I was a child, but I have forgotten the words of it. I remember only the thing that happened.

"The man of Mali Sharit went every day to the wood on the mountain, and in that wood was

7: Amery G-5 (1943-44) 1948 EG1 Albania EG1

administrative ends. Indeed, save for the short-lived rule of Skanderbeg, there had never been an independent Albania until modern times. It is therefore small matter for surprise that the Albanians have hardly acquired a national or state consciousness; nor indeed, outside of the towns and the coastal plain, has nature encouraged, or their way of life given rise to, social organisation in any form.

At the time of which I write, the family, or clan, was the basic, indeed the only unit of society among the Gheg mountaineers; and was held together by common ownership of the means of production and common interest in their defence. The head, or chief, of the clan still preserved patriarchal powers, sometimes even of life and death over its members. He arranged their marriages, allotted them their tasks, settled their disputes, and decided what courses they should follow in the burning issues of blood feuds and politics. In recent years, however, the spread of Western ideas had weakened the traditional respect for the patriarchal authority; nor was there any sufficient intermediate patriotism of the province or the village to take its place. Indeed, the village community as we know it did not exist, for the village of the Gheg highlands was but a group of houses, each often as much as a mile from its neighbour. There were no village councils or other corporate institutions, and the feuds between the inhabitants prevailed over their common interests. The ancient tribal system was thus dissolving into anarchy, for where there is no community there can be no law. Indeed, the cry of "stop thief!" would have been almost inconceivable among the Albanians, "Because", as Wordsworth wrote of other highlanders:

> the good old rule
> Sufficeth them, the simple plan,
> That they should take, who have the power,
> And they should keep who can.

In such circumstances, each man had to be his own law-giver, and alone, or at best with the help of his family, defended his rights or punished those that trespassed against him.

Anarchy knows no prisons — the most fundamental of social

7: Amery G-5 (1943-44) 1948 EG1 Albania EG1

among ourselves. There we took stock of what we had learned, and sought to impose a definite pattern on the many projects we had so often revolved on the march, or discussed around the hearth at night. Our[1] first aim from the beginning had been to raise the Ghegs against the Germans, both with the laudable object of killing our enemies wherever and whenever possible, and, above all, so as to disrupt their overland communications: the main road from Tirana to Scutari and its lateral links with Macedonia — the roads from Tirana to Dibra and from Scutari to Kukes and Prizren. These roads were important targets; for the German troops in Albania depended upon them for their communications with the Reich, and they also afforded the second of the two lines of retreat open to the enemy's garrisons in Greece.

The thinkers who inspire, and the historians who record, the course of revolutions tend naturally to dwell on those ideological issues which lend them their distinctive character. In the making, however, they more often appear to the revolutionary, as wars do to the strategist, in terms of power and technique. The first object, therefore, of our reconnaissances had been to discover what was the distribution of power in North Albania.

The strongest force in the land was still the German army, but the roots of its strength were abroad, and our journeys had shown us that its influence was on the wane. Among the Ghegs power lay in the armed might and resources of the tribes, and, to a much smaller extent, in the wealth of the merchants and the landowners of the plain. The strength of the tribes was sapped by their disunity and was never canalised into any higher unit of organisation than the tribe itself. Nevertheless, geographical barriers tended to separate the tribes into distinct regional groups; and, within one or more such groups, they were sometimes brought together by a man pre-eminent among them by his personal ability, family tradition, or wealth. Such a leader enjoyed influence rather than authority; for his following was never more than a loose, voluntary, and shifting confederacy of tribes and parts of tribes, intolerant of any form of discipline. These confederacies were none the less the

[1] [British underground liaison officers — Analyst]

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strongest forces among the Ghegs, and their leaders might be identified as the principal " ministers of power ".

Our reconnaissance had shown us that there were at this time five such confederacies among the Ghegs, led respectively by Abas Kupi, Jon Marko Joni, Gani Kryeziu, Muharrem Bairaktar, and Fikri Dine. Of these Abas Kupi was the most powerful ; he swayed the central provinces of Mati, Kruya, and Tirana ; and his influence extended to the tribes of Shivak, Dibra, the southern *Bairaks* of Mirdita, and the Catholic regions north of the Drin. We reckoned his potential strength at between five thousand and ten thousand rifles ; and he might, besides, enjoy the financial backing of the Tirana merchants and of the landowning *Beys* of Central Albania. Second to him stood Jon Marko Joni, the hereditary Captain of Mirdita. He might command three thousand rifles among his clansmen alone, a further two thousand from the Catholics of the North, and the financial support of the guilds and churches of Scutari. Next in the hierarchy of power came Gani Kryeziu, whose influence was waxing among the Moslem chiefs beyond the Drin, and whose strength was computed at more than two thousand rifles. Almost as powerful was Muharrem Bairaktar, the Lord of Liuma, who might raise a thousand rifles from his own clansmen and as many again from among his confederates in Puka, Lura, and Dibra. Fikri Dine's power was harder to assess and it seemed doubtful whether he could raise even five hundred men alone. It was said, however, that there were six thousand rifles in Dibra ; and, though it was unlikely that more than three thousand could ever be brought into action, the bulk of these might follow Fikri if he fought in alliance with Abas Kupi or Muharrem Bairaktar.

These powerful men thus commanded between them more than fifteen thousand rifles, and, if the fortunes of war were favourable, they might hope to recruit a further ten thousand scattered among the smaller and more isolated clans. At this time, however, they were divided among themselves by ancient feuds, personal jealousies, and their varying attachment to the Allied or to the German cause. Hitherto these divisions had paralysed their strength, but many circumstances were now

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Map to illustrate the situation in Northern Albania, and the activities of the Maclean Mission, April-November 1944

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combining to bring them together against the Germans.

The Ghegs, indeed, were stirred by no deep economic or social discontents. The state of anarchy which had prevailed since the collapse of Italian rule was most welcome to the tribes, and they were sustained in their enjoyment of its licence by cheap and plentiful supplies of bread from the granaries of the Kossovo. Their leaders might variously incline towards the Allies or the Germans, but the ordinary tribesmen remained supremely indifferent to the invaders, whom he seldom saw. Hitherto the tribes had therefore favoured a policy of neutrality, but the growing weakness of the Germans of itself supplied a powerful incentive to revolt. The prospect of a German surrender or withdrawal sharply stimulated their predatory appetites ; and their Chiefs, including the " collaborationists " among them, made ready for the day when they might fall upon the stricken Germans to strip them of their power, their weapons, and their wealth.

Left to themselves, the Ghegs would have bided their time until their leaders had discovered that the Germans could be attacked and plundered with impunity. The revolt would thus in all probability have been delayed until the eve of a German retreat, or until Allied forces had landed in Albania. The growth, however, of the L.N.C. introduced a new and disturbing factor into their calculations. The Partisan leaders had already proclaimed themselves the future rulers of Albania and made little secret that, as Communists and as Tosks, they had no room in their scheme of things for the tribal lairds of the North. The Gheg chieftains were thus still further united by the advance of a rival who threatened to deprive them equally of all share in the plunder of the enemy and in the future government of their country.

The Gheg leaders were not afraid of the growth of a Partisan movement in North Albania ; for the conservatism of the tribes, Catholic influence, and the Slav associations of Communism made the mountaineers predominantly hostile to the L.N.C. Nor indeed were they alarmed by the warlike qualities of the Partisans, for they considered themselves a match for Tosk troops of any kind. They knew, however, that the L.N.C.

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*669 [619] had for some time been receiving military supplies from the British and would thus be well equipped with mortars and automatic weapons. They were convinced, moreover, that, if Enver Hoja should fail to conquer the North by his own efforts, he could always count on the help of Marshal Tito, and, in the last instance, of Soviet Russia itself.

*669 648 The knowledge that their rivals enjoyed foreign support admonished the Ghegs of their own isolation, and they rightly concluded that their only hope of escaping destruction lay in securing foreign backing for themselves. Seeing that the Partisans were inspired by the Russians and armed by the British, the first reaction of many among them had been to turn to the Germans for help. This, indeed, was the policy pursued by Jon Marko Joni and by Fikri Dine, who sought, though somewhat half-heartedly, to crush the L.N.C. with levies equipped and supported by the Germans. Neither of these leaders any longer believed in a German victory, but they hoped to use the German army to suppress the social revolution before the Allies came. Their policy, however, was openly condemned by Gani Kryeziu and later by Abas Kupi, who both recognised that its success was improbable and that its failure must be disastrous. They held instead that it was only by obtaining British support that the Ghegs might be saved and that they must therefore do all in their power to comply with British demands. These leaders understood, if they did not always approve, our motives in supporting the L.N.C., but they could not believe that a British government would ever allow a Communist, and therefore Russian-controlled, regime to be set up at the entrance to the Adriatic. There were thus two schools of thought among the Gheg leaders as to how best to meet the danger of Communism.

Anglophiles and " collaborationists " publicly accused each other of betraying their common interests, but the line of distinction between them was often blurred and fluctuating. The Anglophiles could scarcely regret the losses which the " collaborationists " inflicted on the L.N.C.; and the " collaborationists ", for their part, regarded the Anglophiles as exponents of an alternative, rather than a contrary, policy to

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escape from foreign soldiers was no great problem for an able-bodied man fighting in his own country. This elusiveness of the guerillas drove their opponents to indirect retaliation ; they imprisoned their families and confiscated their property, and even proceeded against the harmless villagers who had failed to denounce or to prevent their operations. Thus, in revolt, the heaviest burden fell not on the combatants, as in war, but on the wives and children, the cattle and the homes which remained as hostages in the hands of the enemy.

It followed from this that the elements most naturally inclined to revolt were the young who had no family responsibilities and the " have-nots ", who had no property to lose. To them revolt offered faith, discipline, and a way of life ; and the strength which they acquired collectively in battle afforded hopes of wealth and power in the event of victory. They started from nothing ; their organisation was moulded in the forge of war ; its growth was slow. Prolonged guerilla warfare was thus their natural military expression. By the same token, those with a stake in the country were at a disadvantage in guerilla war ; for their families and possessions were so many hostages in the hands of the enemy. Heroes among them might sacrifice their all to fight for freedom ; the braver sort would run great risks for great gains ; but the majority would only take the field if they knew that their families and homes were safe from enemy reprisals. Without such protection, indeed, either they would withdraw their support from the revolt or else the social order itself would be transformed by the destruction through reprisals of the property relationships on which it was based. The leaders of an established society would therefore tend to postpone revolt until their hopes of victory outweighed their fears of reprisals. At the same time — and this was their great advantage over the other sort of revolutionaries — if they once decided to fight, they would not have to create a new organisation but would go into action with the full force of an organised community behind them. [1]

Applied to the situation in Albania, this theory explained the difference between the Partisans and the Gheg tribal confederacies, and showed that their military efforts must

[1] [cf. cat. no. 669, pp. 165-167 -- Analyst]

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naturally develop along different lines. The Partisans had started as a small Communist cell, destitute of resources, and had slowly recruited their forces from among the landless peasants and the youth of the towns. By joining an avowedly social-revolutionary movement these recruits had become outlaws; there could be no turning back; and, since they lacked personal wealth or the backing of a tribe, they were easily subjected to the discipline of a movement on which they depended for their daily bread. With no resources of their own, the Partisans had to fight if they would eat, and thus were driven from one raid to another by sheer necessity. Nor was their zeal for war and plunder restrained by fear of reprisals against property; for they were, by definition, of the dispossessed. Indeed they might even welcome reprisals; for, by adding to the number of the dispossessed, reprisals added to the number of their potential supporters, while the destruction of property which they involved weakened the economic foundations of a hostile social order. The operations of the Partisans, therefore, took the form of sustained guerilla raids; and their movement fed on the devastation which it caused and grew, Phoenix-like, from the ashes of its own defeats. Sometimes they attacked the Germans; more often they plundered their richer compatriots; but whether they advanced the cause of national liberation or of social revolution, the bitterness of their enemies convinced them that they could never lay aside their arms with impunity, except as masters of Albania. Thus discipline was seconded by experience of battle, and morale was fortified by the knowledge that their only hope of safety lay in victory.

The conditions of a Gheg rising were altogether different, for the Gheg leaders were the representatives of the existing social order; and their strength was rooted in the tribal system. Gheg armies were nothing but the tribes on a war footing; and each contingent marched under the orders of its own tribal chief. In the simple conditions of highland life considerable forces might thus be mustered at little more than a day's notice; and each tribesman in them would be a natural guerilla and an accurate marksman. Discipline, however, was rare; the habit of team work unknown; and at every stage in a

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campaign protracted negotiations supplied the place of concise orders. But, besides being invertebrate, Gheg armies were also short-winded; for they depended for their food supplies on the bounty of the clans, and no region could long support the expense of a campaign. The tribesmen, moreover, were shepherds and farmers, and, as such, were continually distracted by domestic cares and especially sensitive to the threat of reprisals against property. To obtain their support, therefore, the revolt must be a paying proposition; and it was essential to show that the prospects of plunder or subsidies would exceed the probable costs of fighting and outweigh the expectation of losses through reprisals.

This fundamental consideration lent certain distinctive features to the warfare of the Ghegs. They required a sufficient extent of territory as a "safe harbour" into which the non-combatants might withdraw with their flocks and movable property beyond the reach of enemy punitive expeditions. They sought to raise the strongest possible fighting force, not only for its weight in the attack, but also to deter the enemy from lightly sending out troops to devastate their homes. Above all, they aimed at achieving a decisive victory in the shortest possible time, so as to win the spoils of war without incurring expenses or reprisals. The Gheg tribes were thus wholly unsuited to sustained guerilla raids which involved living on the country and might lead to heavy reprisals. Instead, their natural form of offensive war was a general revolt, based on the full extent of their territory, supported by the strongest available forces and directed to attaining their objective in the shortest possible time.

We had seen for ourselves that no single Gheg leader swayed a broad enough region or a sufficient following to challenge the Germans alone. But if the five great chieftains, Abas Kupi, Gani Kryeziu, Muharrem Bairaktar, Jon Marko Joni, and Fikri Dine, were to rise up together they would encounter the German army on more equal terms. Their combined territories would provide an impenetrable "safe harbour" where the non-combatants could withdraw with their flocks and where the tribesmen might await military

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supplies from Italy without fear of enemy interception. Their combined forces, moreover, would amount to somewhere between fifteen and twenty-five thousand rifles, which would be rapidly reinforced with mortars and machine-guns from the Allied arsenals. Such an army would be comparable in numbers, if not in equipment, and superior in valour, if inferior in discipline, to that of the L.N.C.; nor was it by any means certain that the Germans still possessed the energy or could spare the troops for its suppression. We concluded, therefore, that Gheg resistance against the Germans must take the form of a general revolt.

This conception of a general revolt had for some weeks been shaping in our minds; and we had already prepared the ground for its fulfilment in our preliminary negotiations with the Gheg leaders. Gani Kryeziu was already fighting the Germans; agreement with Abas Kupi seemed to hang on instructions from King Zog; Muharrem Bairaktar had announced his readiness to take the field if armed; and Jon Marko Joni and Fikri Dine had sounded Abas Kupi to learn on what terms they might now change sides. Starting from this foundation the next step was to reach final agreement with Abas Kupi. Once this had been done we would summon a congress of all the Gheg leaders and their satellite chiefs and invite them to proclaim a general revolt of North Albania. At such a congress Abas Kupi and Gani Kryeziu would naturally exert all their influence to bring the other leaders into the war beside them; and we were confident that Muharrem Bairaktar and the Dibran chiefs would not be slow to follow their example. Jon Marko Joni might show more reluctance but, despite his close connections with the enemy, we doubted whether he would long resist the prospects of plunder, the hopes of power, and the promises of rifles and gold.

Our chances of success, however, were threatened by the danger of a conflict between the Zogists and the Partisans; and this it was our duty to prevent for weighty reasons, military and political: military, because civil war must consume the energies of both resistance movements at the expense of their operations against the Germans; political, because the

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crests; numerous valleys lie between them, each surprisingly narrow and steep-sided, some 3000 feet deep, all watered by a winter, if not by a perennial, stream, and many branching off right and left into side-valleys. In the district of Martanesh the ranges are rounded in outline, the summits are spreading instead of steep and sharp, large tracts of ground are comparatively unbroken, and in place of the countless valleys and streamlets of the north there are only a few deep ravines, each with a river on its floor.

These geographical characteristics have influenced the tribal cleft which still survives in the population. The main valleys in the north, such as Shalë, Shkrel or Orosh, are each capable of supporting a small unit such as a tribe, but seldom more. Appropriately, then, each is inhabited by a single tribe, which jealously prevents strangers from settling in its territory. The broad spaces farther south, such as the plateaux of Mat and Dibër, or the heights of Martanesh and adjacent Çermenikë, can carry a much larger population, in which no one tribe could hope to maintain its racial integrity or its political supremacy. Consequently, they are non-tribal and peopled partly by indigenous families, partly, at least in the case of Mat and Dibër, by immigrants, all of whom came in small numbers and many within recent memory. To quote only one example of each type, the Kadije family of Lis in eastern Mat is indigenous, and its neighbours at Burgajet, the Zogolli family, are immigrants.

More than the forms of social grouping have been affected by the physical features of the country. The number and height of the mountains have made stock-raising as important as agriculture to Albanians. Both parts of the range that rises sheer as a wall and green with forests from the coastal plain are over 3000 feet high, that of Krujë to the north being 3280–3940 feet and that of Dajt, which forms so beautiful a feature of the scenery round Tirana (Tiranë), 5290 feet—nearly 900 feet more than Ben Nevis and 1720 feet more than Snowdon. The parallel range which bounds the plateau of Mat on the east runs southwards from Mt Nezhdë in Lurë to Mt Dêjë and on to Mt Allaman at a height that is in few places below 5000 feet and is often above 6000 feet. The frontier range is still higher, composed as it is of Mt Çjalicë (8150 feet) and Mt Korab (9070 feet), the former in Lumë, the latter in Dibër. The topmost summits of the Martanesh area, Mt Kaptinë and Mt Lopë, are respectively 6145 and 6630 feet in height; the surrounding ranges average 5000 feet. As seen from Shkodër, the welter of

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northern mountains begins modestly with ranges 2000–2600 feet above sea-level, surpasses 7000 feet in several peaks of Lower Shalë, and culminates in the Accursed Alps (*Bjeshkët ë Nemuna*), where the close-set summits of Radohinë (8690 feet), Jezercë (8790 feet), Rosh (8270 feet) and Kolatë (8370 feet) wall off Yugoslavia from Upper Shalë in spectacular fashion. East of Shalë, the monster Peak of the Irons (*Majë e Hekuravë*, 8530 feet) divides the tribe of Mertur from the open plateau of Krasniqë. The passes across the mountains are often lofty and arduous. To take an extreme example, the only way from Shalë to Bogë, its western neighbour, is by the Sheep Track Pass, to the northern frontier by the Pejë Pass, and to Nikaj on the east by the Ndermajnë Pass, which are respectively 5900, 5600 and again 5600 feet above sea-level and take a day to traverse. It is self-evident that the tribesmen of Shalë have never seen much of their neighbours. Elsewhere geographical conditions are less formidable, yet generally severe enough to limit intercourse between communities.

It is clear that agriculture and permanent habitations must stop far below the summits of many mountains, and that on the highest slopes there can be only summer grazing. Throughout the area as a whole, however, there is so much summer and winter grazing that many Albanians live entirely by pastoralism and many others combine it with their agriculture. In this connexion it is essential to remember the part played by the immense forests. These spread over the grim mountains as well as the plains, saving Albania from the desiccated look of Dalmatia and Greece, and making its scenery agreeable to the eye at all seasons. The forest trees are of many kinds, with a large proportion of evergreens. Since they grow at different levels according to their kinds, three zones, named the shrub, oak and beech, or pine zones after their predominating tree, have been distinguished.[1]

Shrubs grow all over the plains near the coast and up to a height of 600 feet in exposed regions like Shkodër and Durrës and 1600 feet in sheltered spots like the gullies on Mt Dajt. They include tree heather, hornbeam, arbutus, wild olives, broom and the terrible Christ's Thorn (*Spina Cristi*), which, withered or green, tears the flesh so savagely with its spikes that it is popularly said all over the Near East to have been used for the Crown of Thorns. There is rough winter grazing among the shrubs, especially for

[1] See Gashi, *Shqipnija*, pp. 51–60.

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a first-born may be inefficient, the mantle of a dead or dying head falls on the son who in the opinion of all the adult males in the household is the best fitted to keep it together, irrespective of whether he is the eldest or not.[1] This combination of birth and unanimity of choice gives these heads the strength of inevitability, so that they can be neither envied nor rebelled and intrigued against, but must be recognized and implicitly obeyed by their subordinates—a most important factor in keeping the peace.

Before the Turks left in 1912, the headship of a northern village or tribe descended in the same family, always to the head it had chosen for itself. Since 1912 successive Albanian governments have slightly modified this system. In non-tribal areas like Mat, Martanesh and Shpat there has been less need for a change; as far back as we can go, the head of the average village or group of villages has been elected by the community for his personal qualities in the same way as the head of a house. A few villages of Mat, however, had long been ruled by the landlords (*begs* or *beys*) who owned them; after 1912 the power of these landlords, the Zogu family excepted, was curtailed by the central government like that of the bajraktars of the north.

In the old days the laws were administered as well as enacted or revised by the ruling rank, who were collectively known as elders. The system was elaborate, with public trials over which elders presided, and at which evidence was taken from witnesses on oath as well as from the plaintiff and the accused, and a jury might be asked to render a verdict. Fines were the usual penalty for petty misdemeanours, and temporary banishment, permanent expulsion or death for serious offences; a modified form of imprisonment also existed. Offences against the cohesion of the social fabric, as understood by the mountaineers, were reckoned more serious than crimes against an individual. Thus parricide was graver than fratricide; the first struck a blow at parental authority, an essential part of the social structure, but since one brother had no right to rule another except in special cases, fratricide was little worse than an ordinary murder and hardly a public concern.[2] The murder of a neighbour or the theft of his property seldom entered the serious category until the criminal became an habitual offender. Then the community, regarding the man as a social menace from whom none of its members was safe, took whatever action the law laid down for his case.

[1] See Chapter V.

[2] See Chapter V, p. 38.

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its defects, of course; sometimes a judge took a bribe or a man bore false witness in spite of the deterrents devised against such malpractices. Yet the legal system worked well on the whole, was often speedier and always cheaper than any European counterpart, and left few crimes unsolved. What chiefly precluded modern Albanian governments from adopting the unwritten laws, however, was their diversity. This was mainly due to the isolation in which the geography of their country compels the mountaineers to live, and the fact that they do not settle permanently at altitudes more than 3000 feet above sea-level, but live on the lower slopes of the mountains enclosing their settlement and in summer graze the upper slopes as far as the mountain crests, where a carefully demarcated boundary indicates the end of their property.

Communications were as dangerous as they were difficult. As a result the principle of delegating one man to represent a big geographical unit was not established until modern times. It was regularly practised in small units, where the delegate had to travel only a short distance, and that through known, if not friendly, country. It was enough that one man should represent his house at a General Meeting of his village or tribe, but it was unthinkable to the mountaineers to hold General Meetings at which laws for the whole area might be passed as in an English Parliament. At best two adjoining communities might meet to settle a dispute about their common boundary or a road or forest, and after much argument make laws about the matter that were binding on both. More usually, a village or tribe drew up or revised rules for its own governance without any regard to what others, ten, twenty or fifty miles away, were doing. The outlines of a law might approximate in different groups, especially if there had been some ancestral connexion between them, but the details of the law were as varied as the minds that shaped them in the various communities.

The isolation in which it lived bred a fierce individualism in each community. This prevented it from submitting to the laws of another, except in an emergency. Then it might call in an elder from outside to decide a case and afterwards consider his ruling law. Such an elder had to be specially renowned for wisdom and sound judgement, and with one known exception his influence never ran far beyond the distance he could ride in safety and comfort from his own community.

That exception was Lek Dukagjini, an ancient law-giver of such

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complained against him to the elders, and he was fined ten grosh in Turkish and two gold francs in modern times. In Turkish times a strong man often forced his way through and only a weak man cowed by the guns levelled at him, turned back. The principle of private ownership was carried so far in this village that it extended even to a certain garden road which was not blind but had an exit as well as an entrance. This was reserved for the villagers of one ward, and forbidden to their animals, to the rest of the village and to 'foreigners', with one exception. If a girl from another ward or village had married into the privileged ward[1] her kinsmen had leave to use the forbidden path when on their way to visit her. If even one man in the ward objected, however, he had the right to veto their passage. It is not known how this unusual privilege came into being. The most obvious explanation would be that the families in the ward descended from a common male ancestor, but, in fact, the families were of very mixed descent.

In the extreme north the individual's safety on certain inter-tribal thoroughfares was ensured by what was called the 'truce of sheep and shepherd', because it mainly concerned shepherds and their flocks. Actually travellers and public messengers also enjoyed its protection. Two or more tribes, meeting in full assembly of all their bajraktars, heads, and youth, swore a solemn truce to attacks on life and property on a given route or routes within their territory, and guaranteed its observance. They prescribed the limits of the road which it covered, regulated the behaviour of persons taking advantage of it, and enunciated penalties for breaking it. Thus, a shepherd could lead his flock and graze it only within a prescribed limit. A traveller or public messenger journeying from one of the contracting tribes to another had both going and coming to keep within the points fixed. As soon as he had set foot in the foreign tribe's territory he had to go straight to the bajraktar's house and not turn aside to any other. He must not venture out alone but must always be accompanied by the bajraktar or a guide of his providing. So long as shepherd, traveller or public messenger obeyed these rules and kept to the prescribed road, he was regarded as a public guest and consequently was guaranteed public protection and, what was almost more important, public vengeance in the event of being murdered or robbed. Protection came from the knowledge of the penalties which the foreign tribe would exact for any harm done him. If he were murdered the price of his blood

[1] [in the village of Godolesh --An3145t]

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Mertur and some others were wholly Catholic. Nikç, Selcë, Hot, Kthellë and Lurë were more or less mixed Catholic and Mohammedan. Certain tribes such as Has, Bytyç and Krasniq are at the time of writing completely Mohammedan but were partly Catholic until three or four generations ago, as their genealogies testify. Lumë asserts that it has been completely Mohammedan since the coming of the Turks five centuries ago. It was also not fully tribal, since each bajraktar's following consisted not of a single kin or agglomeration of kins with the same ancestors, but of a number of little kins of varying ancestry.

There were also bajraktars in certain non-tribal areas, such as Shpat and Martanesh in central Albania. Here the dignity was not hereditary and localized, but moved with successive holders from family to family, from quarter to quarter or even from village to village. Fitness for military leadership of the local levies was always demanded, and that quality did not necessarily remain from one generation to another, in the same family, quarter or village. Hysejn Zavolina of the village of Shelcan was a famous bajraktar in Shpat in the last years of Turkish rule, but it was at Fushë e Kuqe in the more central village of Gjinar that he set up his standard. Hysejn Ramaj became bajraktar of Martanesh because he was as popular as he was competent. After having carried his standard to victory in Montenegro he 'got religion' and turned dervish. As Baba Hysejn (Abbot Hysejn) he presided first over the Bektashi monastery (tege) at Krujë and then over that at Martanesh and was buried in the monastery of Zerqan. When he took to the cloister the bajrak passed to Murat Xhabolli, who was from the Gjoni quarter and quite a different family. The great lawgiver, Mus Ballgjini, of the village of Gurakuq was bajraktar of the district of Çermenikë when Turkish rule over Albania ended, but his son did not inherit the office. When Albania developed a conscript army of European type, there could be no more bajraktars in central Albania. Officers led the conscripts, and there was no hereditary principle to preserve the ancient title as there was among the tribes of the north.

In certain areas of the north there were no bajraktars[1] Since beys were feudal lords of the soil it fell to them to lead their henchmen in war. So wherever there were beys of any importance there were no bajraktars. Mat was the classic instance. There were bajraktars to the north of it in tribal Kthellë and Lurë; there were

[1] [the local military leader --Analyst]

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bajraktars to the south of it in non-tribal Martanesh; but there was none within its own boundaries. There factions, not tribes, were the social units, and all power, military and otherwise, was concentrated in the hands of four powerful bey families.

From first to last the primary function of a bajraktar was military. When one learned that war was imminent and troops were required, he had immediately to inform the tribe in the first instance by firing eight shots in quick succession into the air, and in the second by sending out the official runner called *kasnec* with news and a statement of how many men were wanted. One from each house was the usual number. The muster was soon complete, for it was thought shameful to hang back or to hide at home and no time was wasted hunting for deserters. When all had gathered, the march began. Two tribesmen in some cases, and in others four, led off singing. Next came a man closely connected with the bajraktar, preferably his eldest son, carrying the flag. The rank and file followed, firing constantly into the air to show their joy at the call to arms. Any sign of depression at leaving their homes would have been thought disgraceful and unmanly. The best warriors among them had the bajraktar in their midst and would guard him and the flag with their lives till they all came marching home again. No equipment was issued to bajraktars or 'soldiers'; each brought his own rifle and pistols and came in his ordinary clothes. Nor was any military training given them. Their value as soldiers depended upon the rifle practice which they had had at home. It was usually sufficient to make them all good shots. After a few months the war ended and they came home again, still in their peasant clothes and again firing into the air for joy.

In time of peace the bajraktar performed civilian duties. One of the chief was caring for the poor. If they got into trouble or needed work he intervened with the authorities. If they were benighted he gave them free board and lodging. On high occasions he sent them a ram on which to feast. So that they could buy on credit what they needed for their weddings and funerals he went guarantee for them at the village shops; perhaps he even paid for the goods when the following harvest failed and left them unable themselves to clear the debt. At times he lent them money without interest. In return he asked only that if required they would put their rifles at his disposal, joining him in attacking an enemy, spending some weeks annually in his house as unpaid or poorly paid guards,

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escorting him to town, guarding him during his stay there and escorting him home again. If they refused without justifiable cause to give him such service, he withdrew his support from them at least for a time.

The bajraktar[1] was also much occupied with local administration. Here he was assisted by one or more headmen, hereditary officials like himself. Independently or together, he and they checked quarrelling, judged and formulated new laws. He was admittedly their superior, and when their views diverged his prevailed. If pressure of work made him think an increase in their number desirable, he had power to make extra appointments provided only that he first submitted the names of his nominees to the Turkish government for approval. In short, he was the acknowledged head of the local administration.

As supreme administrative head the bajraktar had power to summon a general meeting for administrative as well as military purposes. If the matter at issue was important and affected the whole tribe, he sent the *kasnec* (tribal messenger) to command the presence of one man per house. If narrower issues were involved he summoned only one or more headmen and the local *gjobtarë* (fine-collectors) or other elders. Plenary meetings dealt with anti-social acts grave enough to involve the death penalty or expulsion, judged cases of sacrilege against the church, tightened up tribal discipline by enacting new or re-enacting old laws, decided whether to revolt or not against the Turkish government, and heard important messages from the government. In 1908 a plenary meeting[1] was held by each tribe to decide whether or not it should accept the Young Turk Constitution. Smaller meetings handled business where fines were sufficient punishment for transgression. Notably they regulated grazing rights, fixing the day for a general move to summer pastures, stipulating how many animals each family might feed on a common. They also regulated wood-cutting rights and controlled the supply of water for irrigation. The bajraktar presided at all such meetings, took an active part in the deliberations, and signed or set his seal on any minutes that were kept. He and the elders, as being socially superior, sat apart from the commoners. In the Malësi e Madhe he sat on the ground while the tribesmen stood respectfully on their feet.

[1] See M. E. Durham, *Some Tribal Origins, Laws and Customs of the Balkans*, p. 74.

[1] [the local military leader--Analyst]

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In certain cases the bajraktar and the local headman could act alone. For example, in case of sacrilege against the church they had power to pronounce even a death sentence. In practice, however, they preferred to consult the tribe and the ecclesiastical authorities. After the Young Turks introduced their constitution in 1908 they tried to make everything in Albania very legal and proper. If land was bought, for example, they required a deed of conveyance where the word of witnesses had formerly sufficed. The best lawyer in the land might write out the document and great men witness it, but it had no legal validity until the bajraktar and local headmen had affixed their seals.

As a legal figure the bajraktar had special weight. If called to serve on a jury of twenty-four men, his single person was counted equal to the twelve jurors left unnamed by the elders. A peace made in his presence was particularly binding. If at all distinguished he was often called in by another tribe to settle a dispute that had baffled its own elders. In his own tribe, besides acting as judge in many ordinary cases, he was ultimate referee in all difficult cases. Boundary disputes, the most fertile source of trouble among these land-starved tribes, were often referred straight to him for settlement. Disobedience to his ruling might entail the worst penalties. Particularly in the Malësi e Madhe, he and the local headman had power to appoint elders to settle a quarrel. If these failed to do so, or were found to have based their decision on a false oath by one of the litigants, it fell to the bajraktar and the local headman to reopen the case and to pronounce a final judgement. If a headman judged a case and gave a verdict the bajraktar disliked, he could upset this verdict and substitute one of his own. But neither headman nor elders could upset his judgements; these were always final and unalterable.

All the above applies to the non-tribal areas of central Albania as much as to the northern tribes. Mus Ballgjini of Çermenikë, for instance, was almost more famous as a law-giver than as a military leader. By a seeming exception the bajraktar of the Perlat tribe of Kthellë did not judge but left such matters to the elders. The explanation of the anomaly probably lies in his notorious incompetence. It was every bajraktar's province to judge in peace as well as to lead in war.

In all areas the jurisdiction of the bajraktar was subject to certain limitations. If the commoners did not like one of his decisions,

[the local military leader and administrative head -- Analyst]

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692 [622] even if made in concert with the headmen and elders, they were not bound to abide by it and could compel him to re-examine the case. Neither he nor a headman could, singly or in combination, fine a tribesman without first securing authority from the tribe. After all, he and the headman might have a personal grudge against the man and might fine him for no other reason. To take an example [619] from the non-tribal valley of Bulqizë, Miftar Meta the bajraktar and Lam Isaku his assistant were much respected and admired but they had no power, on their sole responsibility, to fine a man from Fushaj, their own village. Still less had they power to fine a man from another village in Bulqizë. They could not act in either case [623] until they had secured the backing of the culprit's village at a general meeting. Nothing less, it was felt, guaranteed the impartiality of the sentence.

693 623 If a bajraktar misconducted himself, all the headmen and commoners of his tribe, or possibly the commoners alone, sat in judgement on him. They could not ostracize, expel or burn him out like an ordinary criminal; he was too inherently a tribal institution for that. But they could, and did fine him. In 1907,[1] the Kryezi tribe assembled in plenary session, one man from each house, and fined its bajraktar and headmen 100 rams and an ox for some judgements they could prove to have been unjustifiable and prejudiced. The commoners could also ask an erring bajraktar to give a rifle or other valuable as security for his good behaviour in the future.

693 The misconduct for which a bajraktar was fined was seldom more heinous than sending his sheep to pasture on another's ground or pronouncing a biased judgement. On the whole, each was so carefully selected and trained by his predecessor in office that he rarely committed the graver crimes. When one did, he was sure to be so 'strong', i.e. influential, that the tribesmen thought it more prudent to close their eyes to his iniquity. There was much grumbling at the venality of bajraktars, but neither the tribal law nor the Turkish government took cognizance of this offence. If 693 687 a bajraktar, serving as judge or arbitrator, took a bribe, the only remedy lay in the individual tribesman's freedom to choose another law-giver next time. If a bajraktar accepted a 'present' for doing a favour, there was no remedy at all. His victim could only comfort himself by noting how God, or Allah, punished such greed. It was

[1] See Appendix, Document XII, p. 271.

10: Hasluck F-5 (1926-1939)1954 EGl Albania EGl

popularly believed in Shkrel that the three sons of Vatë Marashi, the bajraktar, and the three daughters of the Voivode Preng Mirashi, had turned out badly because the deeds of Vatë and Preng had been evil.

In time of war a bajraktar from the north-west group received triple pay and triple rations. A bajraktar of Shalë received double pay and double rations, one portion as a person and the other as standard-bearer. He also received pay and rations for three servants, two of whom followed him to the war both to guard and to serve him, while the third, a specially trusted man, remained behind in his house in Shalë as guardian of his property, women-folk and children. The allowances for these servants were only what ordinary soldiers received, food and *katik* (pocket-money: in Turkish, any relish eaten with bread) at the rate of one grosh per day, which was barely sufficient for their tobacco.

As an administrator a bajraktar was unpaid in so far as he had no fixed salary. He earned something, however, by his judgements, for which he was paid at the same rate as an elder. In the Malësi e Madhe, as often as he appointed elders, he too received a fee, although they did all the work and he did not stir from home. If they could not agree on a verdict, the litigants appealed to him. He then received a double fee, one the same as the elders' and the other in respect of his own journey to the scene of the quarrel. In other tribes or groups of tribes he did not get off so lightly; he had always to judge the case himself before he received any payment. The fees varied with the importance of the case and the rapacity of the bajraktar. In the tribal, but not in the non-tribal, areas any fines imposed were divided between the bajraktar and the headmen or 'good families' of his tribe. In the Malësi e Madhe a bajraktar who was summoned to Shkodër received ten grosh (50 koronë) per day from the Turkish government for his expenses. But everywhere a bajraktar's best source of income was bribes.

The bajraktar was both the military and administrative head of his tribe. His military and administrative precedence came 'from the staff in his hand', the flag stick of Turkish donation, but descent was the test for social precedence, and priority of descent was not always his. In many tribes there were 'good families' who descended from an older brother or a social superior of his ancestor, and on that account had, generation after generation, taken social precedence of his family.

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554 Modern civilization with its army and dense array of gendarmes
[701] and officials swept away the military and administrative functions of the bajraktar, but his social position remained untouched. So in Krasniqë, Sali Mena, the bajraktar in 1939, had the precedence because he descended from the eldest son of Gjô Vata of the village of Bunjaj; but Hakik Meta, the bajraktar of Lurë, remained inferior to Doçi, Nezhë and Vlad families in that tribe because their ancestors were from better families than his.

576 Social precedence was marked in several characteristically
554 Albanian ways. For instance, if the bajraktar of Perlat in Kthellë met a Simonaj and a Gjet-Kolaj at a feast, his seat would be third from the corner and his portion of meat only the leg. The Simonaj would sit in the corner and get the head and the Gjet-Kolaj would sit next to him and get the shoulder. Even in wartime a bajraktar was kept in his civilian place except during the actual fighting. On the way to and from the battlefield he sat in the seat and ate the portion of meat that appertained to him by descent. In 1935 Lurë was mustered to check a revolt at Fier in central Albania. The bajraktar's men carried the flag out of Lurë into Mat, and by arrangement met Zef Doçi's men at Burrel in Mat. There, though both were on a warlike errand, Zef Doçi sat in the chief seat and the bajraktar and his flag in the fourth. The revolt was suppressed before the tribesmen advanced beyond Burrel. If they had gone on, rifles would have cracked at Fier before Zef Doçi had to yield
[619] the first place to the bajraktar. If one of the bajraktars of Kthellë found it necessary to discuss something with one of the six 'good families', he could not ask its head to come and see him as he would an ordinary tribesman. Instead, he must gird up his own loins and go and see the other. If they disagreed during the discussion, he could not persist in his own view but had to fall in with the other's. Trivial though this insistence on correct precedence and its manifestations may seem, it had its value in maintaining tribal discipline. Slackening of the social framework in communities so backward as these tribesmen would only have ended in anarchy.

The 'first families' excepted, the bajraktar was unquestioned first among the tribesmen, this being signified in the usual manner of corner seat and choicest portion of meat. Any male of his family old enough to walk enjoyed the same precedence and was, by the courteous and diplomatic, addressed as 'bajraktar'.

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Then, to guard against the man's forswearing himself they stipulated that a certain number of men must swear at the same time to his innocence. These might or might not be more than men of standing and reputed probity. Whether or not, they were called 'juror elders' for the period covered by the oath.

A subsection of juror elders was known as 'murder elders'. Men of unusually high repute who never shot without cause or stole or burned a neighbour's property, but not necessarily drawn from the ranks of canon elders, these were qualified by their character for swearing to the innocence of a man accused of murder. This crime being the most serious of all, twenty-four of them had to be found on each occasion. As usual, half were nominated by the judging elders and half found by the accused. When the first half had given their oath the accused was virtually cleared and the oath he then gave was only a formality. In Lumë the more important 'murder elders' refused to waste time on giving their oath in cases of petty crime but always came forward in murder cases if they thought the accused innocent. The mere fact of their coming forward in a case sometimes ended it, the rest of the proceedings seeming farcical by comparison.

In the more organized north there were, besides the Gjomarkaj family, recognized substitutes for elders. The Hereditary Captain of Mirditë represented the family which had ruled over the Alpine region of Orosh and its kindred of Dibër, Fan, Kushnen and Spaç for several hundred years and was said by some to be descended from the Albanian national hero, Skanderbeg. It had remained Catholic, and its long pedigree may be found in the church registers of Orosh. This family was the 'foundation of law'. Specially difficult cases in Mirditë were referred straight to its head for solution. Any case which three pairs of elders had failed to settle was taken to the chieftains of the subtribes and finally to the head of the Gjomarkaj family. Beyond this there was no appeal. Outsiders, even Mohammedan outsiders, were often glad to refer knotty problems to the family. In view of his exalted position the head had many legal rights. He took precedence in every assembly wherever and whenever met. He had the right to summon chieftains and populace to a General Assembly. Whenever necessary he could summon one man per family to a General Assembly in Shën Pal. At every trial or arbitration he could intervene. He had the right to uproot a family and expel it from Mirditë. He could

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619 even pass a sentence of death, for the 'quarters of the body are a matter for the tribes but the head belongs to Gjomarkaj', says the law. In virtue of these rights, if a village rebelled against the authorities of its tribe, word had to be sent to the Gjomarkaj family, which then summoned the other subtribes and led them against the insurgent villagers and reduced them to reason by fining some, banishing others and destroying others root and branch.

[671] But there were limitations to the head's power. Laws made in concert for themselves by the elders and commonalty of a village about such matters as instigation to crime, breaking one's pledged word, murder and robbery could not be upset by either the tribal authorities or the Gjomarkaj family, provided that these new laws were not innovations contrary to the spirit of the ancient law of the mountains.

1 [the leading family in the region of Orosh, Dibër, Fan, n Kushnen and Spaç for several hundred years--Ana

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CHAPTER XIV

GENERAL ASSEMBLIES

619 Turkish suzerainty affected the life of the remoter areas so little that each tribe, and in non-tribal areas each region, was virtually a self-governing unit. The governing bodies in tribal areas were the General Assemblies and the Partial Assemblies. In Turkish times these meetings were often called *mexhlis* (from Arabic '*majlis*' meaning council, assembly, parliament). *Kuvend* is the Latin '*conventio*' (gathering) in Albanian dress. In non-tribal areas regional or village assemblies corresponded to the general and partial assemblies of the tribes.

The General Assembly was usually a tribal gathering, but the word *Kuvend* was used by the Albanians to indicate the national parliament during the German occupation in 1943–4 when Albanian nationalism expressed itself in rejecting the use of words of foreign origin.

In the fifteenth century there was a *Kuvend* of great historical importance when the men of the region of north Albania met to hear Lek Dukagjini, the lord of the extreme north, debate points of law with Skanderbeg, the lord of north central Albania.

[634] Tribal assemblies brought together one or more tribes. These were plenary, attended by the whole tribe (or region) on the basis of 'one man from each house'. They were convened and presided over by the highest authority available. This was the bajraktar in most tribes, but one of the Gjomarkaj family or a bajraktar in Mirditë. In Dibër, Mat and Kurbin it was the head of the leading family, and in Çermenikë the regional elder. Miss Durham found the president elected in Theth, and stated that this innovation was spreading. Where a General Assembly of two or more tribes took place the meeting resulted from a conference of the chief men of each tribe, convened by the highest dignitary in each tribe and presided over by the highest of these high dignitaries.

613 623 Partial Assemblies too were plenary and were convened and presided over by the head of the unit concerned. The more important were formed by a village or a kin. In a document preserved for

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us by Father Gjeçov,[1] the last clause announces that though the Pecnikaj kin of Shalë laid down the law enunciated in clause 2, it had the support of the Lotaj, Abati (Abat) and Bobi (Bob) kins in doing so. Its first and its fourth clauses consider the adhesion of the brotherhood of Theth as well. Occasionally there was a partial meeting of a brotherhood, and at the bottom of the scale there were household meetings at which the master set some common problem before all the men in the family.

Generally speaking, assemblies of all types took place at irregular intervals, to meet some special need, though the demand that they should be called regularly once a year was not unknown.[2]

When a kin or smaller meeting was in question, the convener sent anyone he could find to call it. Bigger meetings were summoned by word of mouth by the public messenger. In Mat a gipsy beat out the summons on his drum and in Shpat church bells were rung.

Attendance at a plenary meeting was compulsory, non-attendance punishable by a fine. For instance, an elder of Kurbin who failed to turn up and could not satisfy the other elders that his absence was justified was fined five rams. An ordinary tribesman in the same area was fined one ram and in Kastrat 250 piastres. The strength and solidarity of the tribes were closely connected with the plenary character of their assemblies.

Most public meetings took place in the open air, as church houses were usually too small and schoolrooms and village halls did not exist. Meeting places had to be central and free from cultivation, rock, scrub and forest so as to provide adequate seating space In Catholic areas the yard of the church was commonly used for General Assemblies and in Moslem areas that of the mosque. Assemblies of a village or kin could be held in the most central of the smaller clearings of the area, and a house was big enough for a brotherhood or household assembly.

Some meeting-places were specially famous. At Lesh, a thriving seaport at the mouth of the river Drin, and not the malarial inland townlet into which it has been converted by the advance of the Drin towards Italy, Lek Dukagjini and Skanderbeg met by preference, as it was centrally situated for both their domains. The place of meeting was probably the grassy sward near the ruined church on the right bank of the Drin, opposite the modern town.

[1] See Appendix, Document XII, p. 272

[2] See Appendix, Document V, § 16, p. 264.

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623 In Lower Martanesh Selim Lashku dispensed justice to the village of Martanesh under a branching tree by the *Gur i Kuvendit* (Stone of Assembly). At the spring called Gurrë Gega, which is at the confluence of the Shëmil and Gurakuq torrents in Çermenikë, he used to meet his famous contemporary of Gurakuq village, Mus Ballgjini, at plenary meetings of the twelve villages of Çermenikë. A list of the usual meeting-places of his day is to be found in Father Gjeçov's book.

The convener fixed the time and place of meeting. The favourite time was the early morning, as this left the whole day free for arguing.

634 619 The bajraktar presided over the General Assembly and sat cross-legged on the ground in the most honourable place. Near him sat other dignitaries—voivodes, village elders, clan elders, village ancients and clan ancients in due order of social precedence. Facing them and well apart sat the rest of the tribe, the youth, the commoners, the public messengers and the fine-collectors (*gjobtarë*), in a half-circle in Mirditë, and elsewhere in a roughly shaped rectangle or circle. The essential thing was that each man present should see and be seen by everybody else, and should have room to advance, if required, to the dignitaries. Since neither youth nor voivodes and fine-collectors existed in southerly districts like Martanesh, General Assemblies there consisted only of the bajraktar, elders, commoners, and public messengers.

[695] Every effort was made to keep a meeting orderly. When a presiding dignitary, a judging elder or a witness was speaking no interruption was allowed. Insulting remarks and abuse were prohibited under pain of a fine that might amount to as many as five rams. Calling another a liar meant a fine of 500 piastres. For the better observance of these rules when a case was being tried, the disputants were not allowed to address the court. Each had to go some distance away with his elder in order to tell him his story quietly, and had to return to his place at the meeting to await judgement in silence. The elders drew apart from the meeting after their briefing, argued the case out with each other, and returned to the meeting to announce their decision in the hearing of all present. In this way only two or three men talked, the rest sat quiet and listened. In Mirditë a stranger might not take part in a general meeting, but in Lumë and Çermenikë, in the belief that a stranger could have 'nothing in his bosom or his pocket', that

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is to say, no interested motive for his opinion, he was actually encouraged to express his views. Among the Catholics of the far north the priest was permitted to speak, as though he were one of the tribesmen, but his views did not necessarily prevail.

It was unthinkable, of course, that the tribesmen should come without their arms in view of possible dangers on the way. So the law said explicitly that they might bring them. But as soon as they took their places cross-legged on the ground they had to lay their guns on the grass in front of them or on their laps and had to keep them so until the meeting ended. The Catholics sometimes let the priest coax them into depositing their arms in the church house for the duration of the meeting. If anyone raised his gun in anger, it was promptly taken from him by his neighbours. If anyone fired his gun the rest of the meeting immediately formed itself into a firing squad and killed him, and then went in a body to his house and burned it down. Even at the smallest meeting there were four or five important men present who kept a sharp look-out ready to prevent trouble. The priests too kept good watch, and a Franciscan found in Theth by Miss Durham in 1908 told the following story: 'We nearly had a row at the *mexhlis*[1] a little while ago.... I heard a fearful noise and as I ran out a lot of them got up into a bunch like bees and raised their rifles. They were just going to fire. They would not listen to me. I rushed into the church and rang the bell as hard as I could. It had a splendid effect. As soon as they heard the bell, from habit they all shoved their pistols into their belts and took their guns in their left hands and began to cross themselves. No one knew what had happened. They poured into the church to see. By the time we came out again... they were quieted.'

Proceedings usually began with a statement by the president that the tribe had assembled to consider certain matters in the manner required by God and the canon, that is to say, with justice and without innovations or departures from the established law. Great importance was attached to the latter point. The decisions of specialist elders were accepted only on condition that they conformed to the accepted law and did not constitute innovations. This proviso was thought unnecessary in the case of elders who had been bred to the law as the specialists had not, and were therefore trusted to stick to it. This conservatism maintained the strength of the law, the main factor in keeping the tribe together.

[1] General Assembly.

10:Hasluck F-5 (1926-1939)1954 EG1 Albania EG1

CHAPTER XV

ASSEMBLIES AND THEIR WORK

623 634 619 Assemblies sometimes dealt with internal matters such as criminal trials, formulation of laws, local administration, and sometimes with the external relations of the community. Internal affairs were dealt with, according to their gravity, by the tribe, village or kin, but a plenary assembly had to be called to consider foreign affairs.

619 669 During the nineteenth and early part of the twentieth century the northern tribes of Albania were singly or collectively in constant opposition to Turkish sovereignty, and plenary assemblies were summoned by tribes whenever they planned to break out into open revolt. Earlier in 1855 and 1862 there had been attacks on the Montenegrins by the Mirditë, which had followed on plenary assemblies of the Mirditë tribes.

In 1881 the Albanians of Kosovë formed the League of Prizren in order to struggle more effectively for independence of Turkey. [631] All over Kosovë and what afterwards became the kingdom of Albania plenary meetings were held by tribes, and, where these did not exist as in south Albania, by districts, to decide on whether to join this League or not. Again in 1908, as Miss Durham relates,[1] the northern tribes held plenary meetings about accepting the new [721] Turkish constitution. The Albanian attack on the Turkish garrisons in Skoplje and adjacent towns, that began the Balkan war of 1912, was prefaced by general assemblies of every tribe in Kosovë and north Albania. In the summer of 1914, when Esad Pashë Toptani revolted against Prince William of Wied, then *Mbret* (king) of Albania, his supporters raised central Albania in his favour by carrying the Koran in one hand and a crucifix in the other to plenary meetings of the villages and bidding the Assembly, generally consisting of Moslems only, choose between the Moslem Esad and the Christian 'Mbret'. In 1942 a plenary meeting of all Mat was convened by the subprefect of Mat in the hope of enforcing obedience to the Italian government of the day. The decisions reached at the meeting were embodied in a document

[1] *Some Tribal Origins* etc., p. 120, n. 1.

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published in the Albanian newspaper *Tomori* on 7 November 1942,[1] a curious mixture of Fascist ideology and ancient mountain law. But the decisions were honoured only in the breach. A few months later, many hundreds of families represented at the meeting were homeless, victims of Italian reprisals for their persistent revolts.

Sometimes a tribe met in plenary session to deal with inter-tribal matters. It might have quarrelled with a neighbour over a grazing or forest boundary between their territories, or the neighbour might be harbouring one of its dangerous criminals. In either case the tribe had to meet in plenary session, first of all to discover by public argument the best way of enforcing its boundary rights or procuring the surrender of the criminal, and secondly to secure public sanction for the steps it decided on. These might even include war. Miss Durham describes a General Assembly of Shalë which she witnessed in 1908.[2] The Moslem tribes to the north and east, surreptitiously armed by the Turkish government, had threatened to massacre Shalë and its Catholic associates if they did not embrace Islam by the next Ramazan. Shalë met in General Assembly, and amid scenes of wild enthusiasm passed a resolution to warn its Moslem neighbours that within seven days of their receiving notice Shalë and its fellow-Catholics would be at war with them.

Sometimes a pair of tribes met in plenary assembly for mutual aid. Several examples of contracts made on such occasions are given by Father Gjeçov; translations of three appear as Documents IV, VII and VIII.[3] In the first the tribes of Nikaj and Mertur pledge the safety of man and beast at certain times of the year. The second is between the tribes of Nikaj and Shalë in 1894, and the third, dated 1895, is between Nikaj and Curraj, a 'brotherhood' of Nikaj. In these latter, each contracting party guarantees the safety of the other's tribesmen when travelling along certain specified roads in its territory; in the first Shalë's guarantee is extended to tribesmen of Shosh, its western neighbour, and Nikaj's guarantee to tribesmen of Mertur, its eastern neighbour. In this way they facilitated a considerable amount of movement from tribe to tribe. Such documents were really an early form of passport, allowing the tribesmen of one tribe 'to pass freely without let or hindrance' in the territory of the other.

[1] See Appendix, Document XIII, p. 272.

[2] Op. cit., pp. 71, 72.

[3] See Appendix, pp. 263, 265, 267.

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Like tribes, villages sometimes met together to try to agree about matters of common interest. Villages often quarrelled over irrigation water, and a forest or pasture boundary. They quarrelled even oftener perhaps because the tracks of stolen animals led from one to the other; cattle-lifting and sheep-stealing were common. The most satisfactory way of dealing with troubles was for the two villages to meet in full assembly. After thrashing the matter out in public they generally reached a settlement, failing which they could only go to war. In the early years of the twentieth century cattle thieving was listed as one of the thirteen most important matters brought before General Assemblies in Martanesh. In 1942 it was still so active a disturber of the public peace that the pro-Fascist subprefect of Mat legislated for it among the questions which were the real occasion of his calling together the 5000 families of Mat.[1]

Law-giving was also an important function of General Assemblies. This activity came to an end with centralization and western legal codes, and its nature can be studied in the documents quoted by Father Gjeçov and reproduced as an appendix to this book, pp. 261 sqq. These documents show the variety of matters with which the law-giving of the Assembly was concerned. For instance, Document I, coming from Malësi e Madhe and dated 1864, is wholly devoted to such subjects as betrothal, bride-price, divorce and abduction or elopement. Document XI, which comes from Kurbin in 1906, is much occupied with stealing and with tightening up the social fabric by making attendance at General Assemblies imperative and the authority of elders supreme. With the proclamation of Albanian independence of Turkey only six years ahead, it contains an interesting political note; no Kurbin man is to become a gendarme in Turkish service or to give one food and shelter; and no Moslem of Kurbin is to curry favour with the Turkish authorities by denouncing a Christian fellow-tribesman. Document XIII, which comes from Mat in 1942, is also dated by its politics enjoining support of the Italian régime in Albania.

In the midst of the variety of subjects in the documents, crimes against life and property are continually appearing as the fundamental threats to the security of the community. A study of the documents shows them as reaffirming and modifying old and recognized laws, rather than formulating new ones. Assemblies

[1] See Appendix, Document XIII, § 4, p. 273.

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Disobedience to accepted authority was not permitted to an individual tribesman, a villager or even a tribe if that formed part, like the Mirditë tribes, of a group of tribes. Several of the Documents end by indicating the penalties that await tribesmen who defy the authority of the General Assembly that had laid down the preceding laws for the public good.

Examples of penalties prescribed are a fine of 3000 grosh, a choice between being burnt out or paying an ox to the tribe and 300 grosh and a ram to the government's representative, and a sentence of having one's house burned down and oneself expelled. Number XIII, the Fascist document from Mat, simply declares that any delinquent will be called a traitor. In each case the whole tribe was to meet again in General Assembly and go in a body to carry out the sentence. According to Document XI the breaker of a pledge guaranteed by the General Assembly of the Elders and Commoners of Kurbin was warned that the said Elders and Commoners would be obliged to burn his house and expel him.'

Elders were seldom tried before a General Assembly. They were kept in check by the fact that if their judgements were found unfair they lost not only face but also fees, for they were seldom asked to judge again. If there were complaints against one he was first asked, like an erring bajraktar or voivode, for a pledge; if he refused to give it he was haled before the General Assembly.

If a disputant flouted an elder's just and carefully considered judgement, he found himself before a General Assembly. For an elder represented a lawful authority. 'If you don't like the decision, go to St Paul's church or the Defile of Orosh (*Grykë e Oroshit*)' was the formula in Mirditë in such cases, church and defile being the favourite meeting-places for the General Assemblies of all its five tribes. If the Assembly upheld the elder's judgement, the penalty usually imposed was banishment for three years for the culprit and his family, the burning down of his house, the destruction of his crops and trees, and leaving his land untilled until he returned.

Sometimes a village was a public nuisance, harrying travellers, stealing its neighbours' beasts, cutting off their irrigation or mill water, trespassing on their forest or grazing, and so on. The bajraktar, voivodes, elders, and all the commoners in the rest of the tribe then gathered in General Assembly, one man from each house, and brought the village to its senses, fining the more harmless

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offenders, banishing others, and executing the ringleaders if these had committed any crime entailing the death penalty.

Sometimes a village went to actual war with the rest of the tribe. As it never did so unless it knew itself to be very strong, the rest of the tribe was sometimes unable to reduce it. If the tribe was alone, the war went on until both sides were exhausted enough to cry halt. If the tribe was one of a group its heads could call in all the men of the other tribes to reduce the belligerent. In Mirditë a Gjomarkaj called the General Assembly which decided on this step, and led its members against the belligerent.

Sometimes, like a pestilent village, a tribe that formed part of a group made itself a nuisance to its neighbours. In that case the General Assembly of the other tribes in the group sentenced it wholesale to the usual penalties—fines for mild offenders, burning out for medium offenders and death for bad offenders. A whole tribe, however, could not be banished. It could only be ostracized, cut off from all intercourse with its neighbours; this penalty lasted until it consented to furnish the usual pledges for its future behaviour.

Village Assemblies dealt with matters of exclusively village interest. They regulated wood-cutting and irrigation rights, for example. They fixed the date at which beasts might be sent up to their summer pasturage on the high mountains. They stipulated the number of beasts that might be sent up by each family. They took steps to see that no one appropriated more than his fair share of forest, irrigation water or grazing. In so doing they made a valuable contribution to the public peace. Some aspects of murder also engaged their attention. The actual crime and revenge for it were the concern only of the families of the murderer and his victim. But it was the concern of the village that the range of revenge should not spread, increasing the number of avenging assassinations and so disturbing the village peace. So the law having laid down that the avenger must allow the murderer a day or two's grace to settle up his affairs before he was besieged in his house, the village had to extract a promise of this grace from the avenger. In cases where the grace lasted for thirty days, the village had to see that the murderer did not abuse his privilege and harry the victim's family. If he showed any such tendency, the village in General Assembly had to fine him and bring his period of grace to an untimely end.

10: Hasluck F-5 (1926-1939)1954 EGl Albania EGl

Assemblies of tribe or village watched above all over their honour. Sometimes their interpretation of honour took strange lines. Father Gjeçov gives the following story from the Mirditë tribe of Spaç. The sister of a villager of Gomsiqe was married to a villager of Dush in the same tribe. It happened that on one occasion when she came to pay a visit to her brother she took ill and died. He and his friends laid her on a bier and carried her, not to their own cemetery, but to her husband's house in Dush, presumably to avoid the expense of burying her. When the village heard what they had done, they met in General Assembly, and after carefully appraising the dishonour brought on Gomsiqe by such a public exhibition of meanness, fined the man a cow. This they divided into fifteen portions, which they distributed among the fifteen houses of the village. The fine was justice at its most precise. If the man had buried his sister as he should have done, the funeral feast would have cost him a cow. The event took place about 1903.

Another type of meanness had a similar end. About 1872 a villager of Urë e Shtrejtë in the tribe of Drisht happened to call on a neighbour about midday and was kept for dinner. As they finished, his host scraped his plate. The visitor afterwards complained to the village of the disgrace brought on his own dinner-table by the host. The village met in General Assembly and fined the host 500 grosh for his meanness. According to the law 'a dinner-table is disgraced in a guest's eyes when the host wipes or licks the porringer or scrapes his plate'.

The smallest General Assemblies—those of brotherhoods and households—dealt with what were essentially family matters. They met perhaps to decide on expelling or even killing any hopeless member if his misdeeds were serious enough to threaten the whole brotherhood or household with wholesale punishment by the tribe. They considered the pros and cons of buying an extra bit of land.

Tribal government was entirely democratic—of the people, by the people and for the people, but it differed from tribe to tribe and from time to time, enough to prevent unity. As the tribes in general would not have accepted the law of any one of them as supreme, it was ultimately necessary for Albanian unity that tribal government should be superseded by a modern system evolved in, and exercised from, a capital.

10: Hasluck F-5 (1926-1939)1954 EGl Albania EGl

each seeking their support. Had four refused at this stage to take the oath Asllan would at once have been publicly convicted—if less than four, two substitutes would have had to be produced for every one that refused; two for one, four for two, and six for three, and there would have been no extension of the time limit. In this case, however, all the compurgators agreed to swear to Asllan's innocence, and he himself, towards the end of the week, swore on the Koran that he had nothing to do with the theft. Later the compurgators, led by Qazim's nominees, took the oath of Asllan's innocence before the whole village. Actually, Qazim cut short the proceedings after six or seven had sworn, as by then the compurgators most likely to know the truth had sworn to the suspect's innocence.

Having celebrated his acquittal with a banquet to the compurgators, Asllan two days later yoked the stolen ox, hidden during the case in a lonely sheepfold, to his plough. Now, although the mistake—either designed or accidental—of the compurgators was obvious, there was no legal machinery for annulling the verdict. In the opinion of the village, however, Asllan received his punishment when shortly afterwards his son was born lame.[1]

Qazim in Labinot put his case into the hands of the headman of his village. In the tribal north he would have entrusted it to the elder of his brotherhood, ward or village or perhaps to the bajraktar of his tribe.

Tribal officials, being hereditary, had more authority to act for their community than had the temporary headman in non-tribal districts such as Labinot. In Milot, the most northerly village of Kurbin, the victim tackled the suspect himself, asking him first if he had committed the outrage and then if he would take oath that he had not. In view of the fieriness of Albanian tempers this information is surprising—one would expect shooting to put an abrupt end to such an interview—but it is confirmed by information from the neighbouring village of Laç. When one of its inhabitants denied having received a loan, the lender asked him directly to swear in the presence of two or three witnesses that he had never been lent the money.

Only men of military age and capacity had standing enough to

[1] A very similar system of compurgators exists among the Naga tribes of Assam. There, however, though in some tribes there is no means of modifying the verdict if an oath prove to be false, in others a compurgator who discovers that his principal is lying can 'withdraw his life', otherwise in danger from the false oath, and so reopen the case *ab initio*. (Ed.)

10: Hasluck F-5 (1926-1939)1954 EGl Albania EGl

CHAPTER XXII

BLOOD FEUD

I. FAMILY VENGEANCE AND COLLECTIVE VENGEANCE

To understand the fabric of the Albanian blood feud it is essential to remember several things. Till after the 1914–18 war communications in Albania were so bad, government centres so few and the gendarmerie so ill-organized that communities were largely self-governing. These communities consisted in the narrower sense of the family, and in the wider sense of the tribe. If a person was injured, the family in most cases, and the tribe in a few cases, by the law of self-government punished the wrongdoer. Since the individual was almost completely submerged in his family, an injury to him was an injury to the whole family and might be punished by any of its members. When the tribal community was involved, the injury might again be avenged by any of its members. When the injury took the form of murder, vengeance generally took the Mosaic form of a life for a life, but sometimes was achieved by the exaction of blood money or the imposition of exile.

When the family of a murdered man, in default of government action, took the punishment of the murderer into its own hands and killed him or one of his male relatives, the head of his family might admit that both sides were equal and make peace. On the other hand, while still admitting that both sides were equal he might prefer to continue the feud by killing a second male from the avenging family; that done, a second life was forfeit on his side. In this way the feud might rage backwards and forwards for years or even generations, each family being in turn murderer and victim, hunter and hunted. 'To take vengeance' was 'to take the blood' (that is, of the man already killed, not of him who was to make atonement); the criminal was called 'the bloodstained', and avenger and criminal thought of each other as the 'enemy'. In north Albania the criminal was also called the 'agent' and the avenger the 'master of the blood of the victim', i.e. the master of the house in which the victim lived. 'To incur a feud' was 'to fall into blood' or 'enmity'.

This simple outline was filled in with all manner of elaborate

10: Hasluck F-5 (1926-1939)1954 EGl Albania EGl

units. For twenty-four hours after a murder in Lumë, a district peopled by little groups of kinsmen, any man of the victim's kin might avenge him on any man of the criminal's kin. So long as members of this group survived no other would move. If they were killed off, other groups, beginning with the nearest neighbours, might seek vengeance. Within living memory this licence found dreadful expression in Theth, the beautiful northern part of Shalë. About 1890 a man who lost a lamb promised to give a cartridge to a shepherd if he found it. When the shepherd succeeded, the man went back on his promise saying he would 'give him five'(*sc.* fingers on the trigger) instead. For the moment the shepherd let the matter drop, but later met the man and asked once more for his promised reward. Again the man refused it, not too courteously, and was immediately killed by the incensed shepherd. Unfortunately, it was Easter Sunday and the murder took place in a meadow where all the men of Theth were gathered for the festival. Immediately the dead man's *vllazni* (brotherhood), comprising all the males descended from the same ancestor, sought vengeance on the murderer's brotherhood. These were not backward in replying, and within an hour fourteen men lay dead for the sake of one cartridge.

Whole tribes might be affected by the rule of 'boiling blood'. In the Malësi e Madhe if a Kastrati tribesman killed a Koplik man, any member of the latter tribe had licence for 24 hours to kill any man from Kastrati. The murderer was, therefore, bound to announce his crime at once so that his fellow-tribesmen might take cover. The time limit elapsed, vengeance lay as usual between the two households. In such cases of inter-tribal aggression each tribe became temporarily a single family in which each member represented the whole.

In Çermenikë, kinsfolk were sometimes fused into one family not by boiling blood as described above, but by a particularly atrocious murder such as that of a guest by his host, when 'circle after circle' was the rule. The guest's 'circle', consisting of his own household, his kinsmen in separate homes, his neighbours and the sons of the married daughters of his family, wherever these last might live, tried to kill the murderer, and failing to find him or other members of his household, they might kill one of his 'circle'. On succeeding, they held that they had avenged their relative's death, and their victim's family agreed. In other districts they

10:Hasluck F-5 (1926-1939)1954 EG1 Albania EG1

682 accusation of taking government money to kill the murderer after
641 he had taken blood money from the family.

[167] The same fear of government action was at work in Kosovë, a province largely populated by Albanians but assigned to Yugoslavia after the Turkish empire broke up in 1912. A steady drift towards Albania proper went on among the Kosovars. Some were impelled by land hunger to go and take up the free land which the Albanian government had offered them; others came to evade Yugoslav justice. By contrast with the Albanian government, which did not yet punish severely homicide that was justifiable by tribal law, the Yugoslav government hanged most murderers. To avoid this ignominy, a Kosovar murderer preferred to emigrate, lock, stock and barrel, to Albania. Most interestingly, this emigration was the ebb of the tide that within recent centuries peopled Kosovë with Albanians.

[621] Sometimes a murderer did not run away of his own accord, but was forcibly expelled by the community. Although when murder was not punished by government, only the weak ran away voluntarily, the community expelled a strong man as readily as a weak one. In tribal districts like Mirditë which contained several villages, the murderer's village could not expel him without the other villages' consent and help. If the village resisted the expulsion, the tribe as a whole had the right to 'proclaim' the village or to call in other tribes to bring it to reason. In small tribes like Nikaj the murderer's kinsmen could expel him independently of the tribe. In non-tribal districts like Shpat, where each village was a self-contained unit, it needed to ask no one before expelling a murderer.

682 A man sentenced to communal expulsion was always one whose
*628 crime struck at the roots of society as understood in the mountains.
674 Perhaps he had violated the acknowledged sanctity of the 'pledged word' by killing his enemy during a public truce or even after making peace with him. Perhaps he had infringed the sacred laws of hospitality by killing his host or guest. Perhaps he threatened family solidarity by killing a cousin to get his land. Perhaps he had killed a man to steal his rifle and thereby as good as robbed him of his manhood, for a man without a rifle is as nothing, no better than a woman. Perhaps he had committed sacrilege by killing someone, possibly the priest himself, inside the territory of church or mosque, or by breaking into the church to steal.

10:Hasluck F-5 (1926-1939)1954 EG1 Albania EG1

[681] 10. The government authorities therefore by this Decree order that the nine points above-mentioned shall be observed and put into execution without fail or opposition.

Issued by the Government Authorities of Shkodër
Shkodër, Albania
May 9th, 1864

L.S. Mareshali
Civil and Military Representative of the
Government with the Prefecture of Shkodër

ISMAIL PASHA

[619] II. Solemn Pledge between Mnelë and Gomsiqe, February 13th, 1873.

(From Father Gjeçov, *Kanùn*, p. 118.)

At the meeting we are holding to-day we have decided to write out the following document in order to have it for reference.

We, the tribesmen of Mnelë and Gomsiqe, comprising 150 houses, have solemnly promised each other to hold ourselves ready and of one mind for every need that may eventuate.

The witnesses of this pledge are:

[Here follow the names of 15 tribesmen, headed by the bajraktar.]

Written this day of February 13th, 1873.

III. Laws Enacted by the Twenty-four Elders and Agreed by the Chiefs, etc. Written in the Village of Kastrat on November 2nd, 1891.

(From Father Gjeçov, *Kanùn*, p. 125.)

1. From Krue i Ri, which belongs to all Kastrat, up to She i Gurit; from Vorr Gjolaj to Breg i Gurrës, marching with Gjelosh Luce; from Shkamb Gropë Mollë to Brigje; from Gjekë Petroviqi to Çukë e Gurrës...whoever quarrels or fires a weapon within these limits will be fined 3000 grosh and 24 rams.

[312] 2. Whoever refuses to allow a woman to fill her water-pitchers at fountains and springs saying she has no right to a share of the water, will be fined 250 grosh and 3 rams.

3. Whoever calls another names in the above-mentioned places or calls another's mother and father names, will be fined, if he is full 15 years old, 250 grosh and 3 rams.

4. Whoever goes to do a mischief in a mill must, if he is full 12 years old, pay a fine of 250 grosh to the miller and 500 grosh and 3 rams to the chiefs.

10: Hasluck F-5 (1926-1939)1954 EGl Albania EGl
[Laws enacted in the village of Kastrat on Nov. 2, 1891]

5. Whoever moves the stones of an old boundary and puts them in a new place will be fined 3000 grosh and 6 rams. [681] [423]

6. No one is to frighten a flock sheltering from the heat in a place it was in first.[1] Whoever does this will be fined 250 grosh and 3 rams. [233]

7. The mill question remains inviolate as always and neither the Vukpalaj nor the Gjolaj may start a *degamë*,[2] and any miller who takes more than 5 per cent of the flour will be fined 500 grosh and 6 rams. [256]

8. Any man who cuts down a tree under which animals take shelter from the heat or cuts off a mill or an irrigation stream will be fined 500 grosh and 6 rams.

9. Other fountains and springs are left under the old law, that is to say, whoever destroys a fountain or spring or prevents another from filling water-pots will be fined 500 grosh. [312]

10. Milling is by order of arrival. Any miller who mills for a man who comes later than another and breaks the order either out of favouritism or because corrupted by bribes will be fined 150 grosh and 3 rams. [256]

11. Whoever admits a stranger to huts on a mountain pasturage will be fined 500 grosh and 6 rams.[3]

IV. Truce Sworn between Nikaj and Mertur on August 10th, 1892. [628] [619]

(From Father Gjeçov, *Kanùn*, p. 121.)

The two tribes have sworn a truce with each other:

(1) As from August 14th up to the day of Our Lady of Mertur.

(2) As from December 26th up to the day of St Sebastian.

The guarantors of Flock and Shepherd, i.e. Nikaj and Mertur and the Bajraktars of Krasniqë and Gash.

V. Laws Enacted in Kastrat and Bajzë on November 1st, 1892 A.D. [681]

(From Father Gjeçov, *Kanùn*, p. 126.)

At a general meeting held under the presidency of Brahim Beg the serxherde, Kasem Beg the bylikbash and the four and twenty chiefs (elders) of Kastrat, the following laws were enacted.

1. Whoever murders a man of Kastrat or of any of the other mountains will be fined 3000 grosh and 24 rams.

[1] This must be a mistranslation. The Italian version of the sentence runs: *che nessuno ardisa impaurire il bastiame gravido.*

[2] The Italian version of this very obscure clause is as follows: *Le disposizioni riguardanti i mulini rimangono inaltarate per sempre e non possono causare litigi nè fra il povero nè fra il ricco*, clearly referring to the principle, enunciated again in § 10, which compels the miller to treat all his clients on the principle of 'first come, first served'. It is possible that the Albanian version has been misunderstood.

[3] This refers to the letting of some of the tribe's scanty pasturage to strangers.

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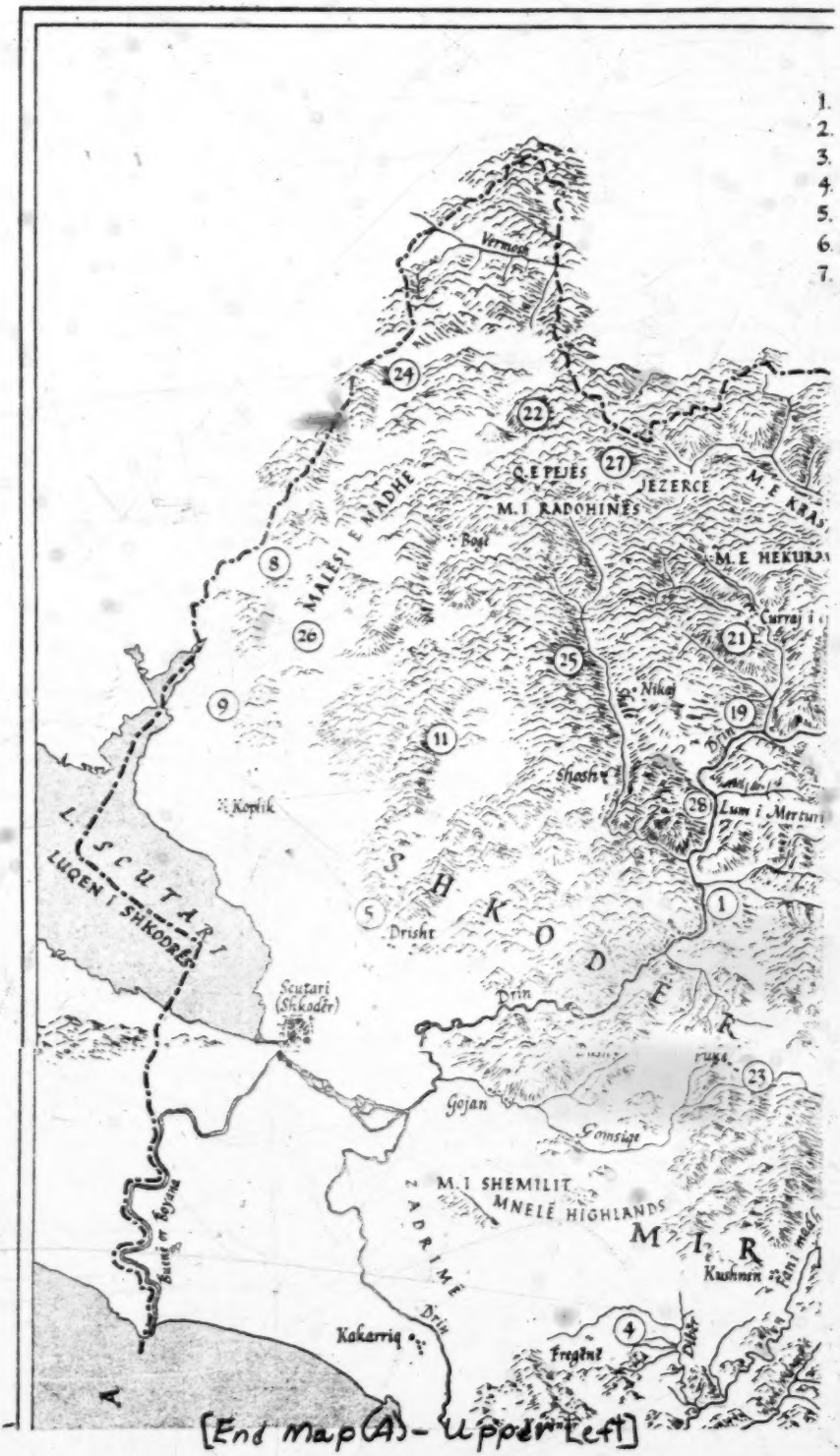
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22
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JEZERCE
M. E KRAS
M.I RADOHINËS
Bogë
M.E HEKURA
MALËSI E MADHE
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Curraj i
9
Nikaj
19
11
Shosh
28
Lum i Mertur
L. SCUTARI
LUQEN I SHKODRËS
Koplik
SHKODËR
5
Drisht
1
Drin
Scutari (Shkodër)
23
Gojan
Gomsiqe
M.I SHEMILIT
MNELË HIGHLANDS
MIR
Kushnen
ADRIMË
Drin
Kakarriq
4
Fregënë
Drin
[End Map (A) - Upper Left]

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Key to tribes

1. Berishë	8. Hot	15. Kurbin	22. Nikç
2. Beshkash	9. Kastrat	16. Lumë	23. Pukë
3. Bytyç	10. Kastriot	17.Urë	24. Selcë
4. Dibër	11. Kir	18. Matjë	25. Sholë
5. Drisht	12. Krasniq	19. Merturr	26. Shkrel
6. Gash	13. Kryezez	20. Mirditë	27. Theth
7. Has	14. Kthellë	21. Nikaj	28. Toplanë

[End map (B)- Upper Right]

10: Hasluck F-5 (1926-1939)1954 EG1 Albania EG1

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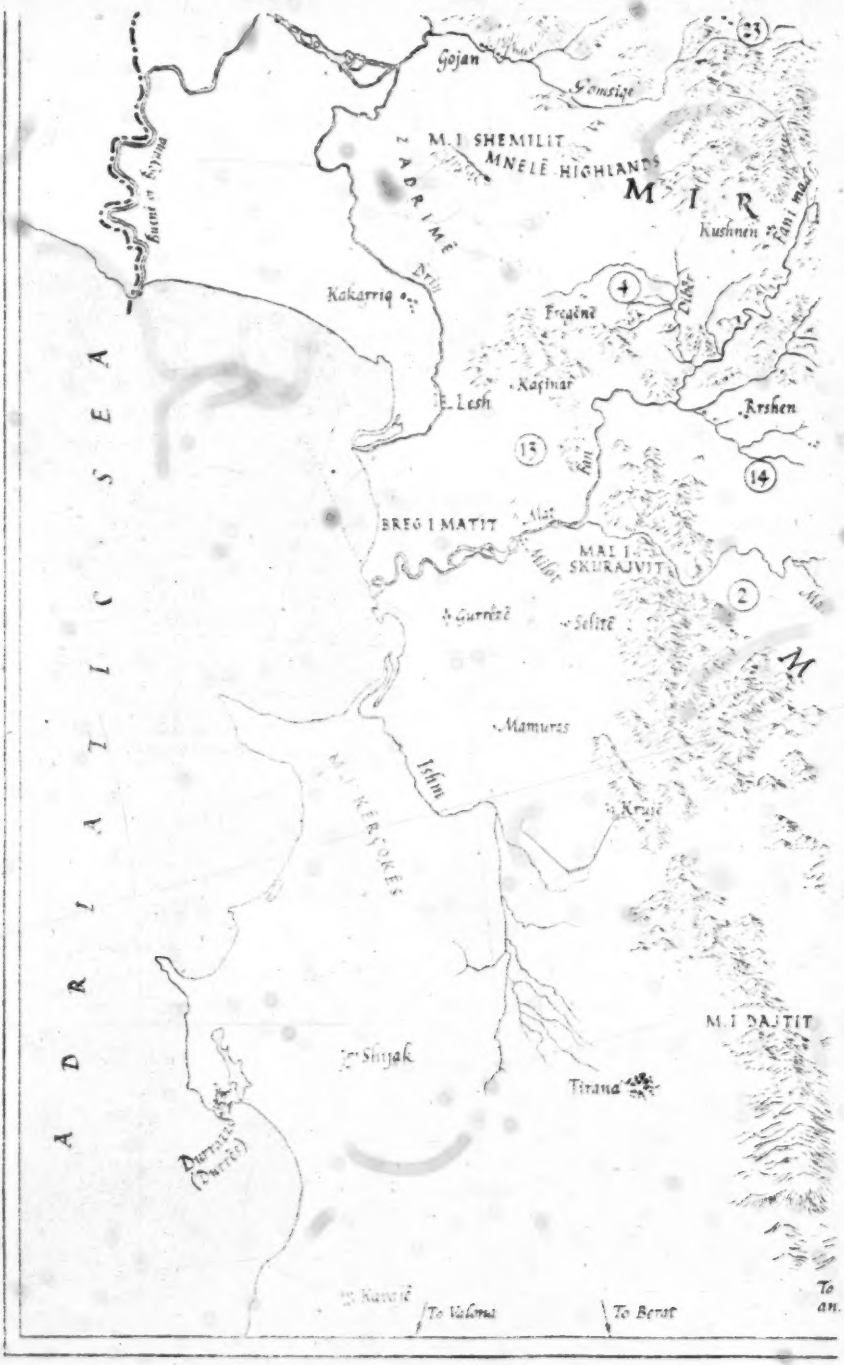

THE NORTH ALBANIAN MOUN

[End Map (C)-Lower Left]

10:Hasluck F-5 (1926-1939)1954 EGl Albania EGl

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N MOUNTAINS AND TRIBES

[End Map (D)-Lower Right]

2: Durham B-5 (ca. 1910)1928 EG1 Albania EG1
Historical Albania EG2

H 794 present Kopliku; Albanian districts on the Drin are also given or ordered to pay tribute. All of which confirms Father Brocardus's statements.

H 792 651 Stefan Urosh III, when founding the monastery at Dechani, gives it in 1330 many "villages and katuns of Vlahs and Albanians between the Lim and White Drin," and gives a list of persons who are to pay tribute, the last of which are Zaharia and Mihal of Nikita in Pulati, who are to pay the former 4,000 and the latter 2,000 cocoons annually to the Church. All Vlahs and Albanians are to carry salt for the monastery. Thus numbers of peasants were put into the power of the Orthodox Church, but though severe laws were enacted against Catholicism, North Albania in large part remains Catholic.

H 175 779 So soon as the Serb Empire fell, references to Albanian chiefs become frequent, and the Catholic Church speedily took the ascendancy. Many of these chiefs took service with their men under Venice. Others were subsidized by Venice as allies. All documents show that at the time of the Turkish invasion there was a large Albanian population both in the mountains and on the plains, which then, as now, were largely used as winter pasture.

The swoop of the conquering Turk, the capture of Scutari and Alessio, the complete destruction of Drivasto, caused a great dislocation of population. As the Turk settled on the fat plains, numbers of refugees took to the mountains. The tradition now told in the mountains of the north is often that of these immigrant refugees, who tell of having found other inhabitants in the land, but the families who now trace direct male descent from these are few. The strict law H 582 of exogamy must, however, have forced the immigrant to intermarry largely with the old inhabitant, and the race continuity is, therefore, unbroken.

2. The Maltsia e Madhe Group

A 619 614 The tribes fall into several main groups.

The Maltsia e Madhe (the Great Mountains) group consisted, when I visited it, of five large tribes and some smaller ones.

1. *Gruda.*—A tribe of one bairak, situated between the river Tsem and the old Montenegrin frontier. To the north of it is Triepshi and south is Hoti. Triepshi was part of this group till given to Montenegro in 1878. Gruda in 1908 consisted of about five hundred "houses." A [592] A "house" was roughly reckoned at from eight to ten souls.

Of these five hundred "houses," eighty traced descent from Berisha (see below), and thus are of old indigenous stock. The remainder, A [167] called Djell, said they were immigrants from the Herzegovina, and that

2: Durham B-5 (ca. 1910)1928 EG1 Albania EG1
Aromunes EH13

they penetrated yet farther into the Albanophone and Catholic Albanian mountains. In the latter case they have remained Albanian; in the former they have been Serbized, and have also acquired doubtless some Slav blood. That the Vlah (Roman-Illyrian) forms a considerable part of the present Albanian inhabitants is indicated by Brocardus's reference to "Latini" and Farlati's to "Blachia."

5. The Tribes of Montenegro up to 1913

The tribes of Montenegro, as they existed up to the beginning of the Great War, have not been recorded in English. I therefore describe them in some detail, for they are the last example of the development of a wholly tribal nation into a State in Europe. I say the last because the tribal system of Albania had disappeared, save in the Northern mountains, long before Albania became independent. When I first went to Montenegro in 1900 it consisted of about thirty tribes. I say "about," for some were recent compounds and not, strictly speaking, tribes.

Montenegro was divided into two parts—Montenegro and the Brda. The first was old Montenegro with some additions on the Herzegovinian side; the second, the mountain mass that borders on Albania. The real "plemé" (tribe) in each consisted of a group of people believing itself to be descended from a common male ancestor. In some cases there was a tale of some previous inhabitants, and in others of later settlers who had been admitted as part of the tribe. I regret that I did not collect the tale of ancestry of each tribe instead of the details of a few, but these will serve to show how a tribe was formed and developed.

Each tribe till recently was exogamous, except when the tribe descended from two or more separate stocks, which were then intermarriageable. Male blood alone counted.

Each tribe was divided into several "bratstvos" (groups of brothers literally) consisting of many cousins and brothers, each calling the other "brother" or "sister." In my time a bratstvo was not reckoned farther than and including second cousins; but in former days it extended farther. When I first lived in my guide's, Krsto's, hovel at Njegushi, I was amazed at the number of his brothers. The neighbours were equally surprised by my narrow idea of a "brother." When I said I believed I had cousins whom I had never seen and whose names I did not know, all were horrified and said the English were no better than dogs. They could not understand a bratstvo that did not live on its own patch of ground. Scattering over the world they thought

[P-35-62 BLANK]

Ancient Albania

ALBANIA YESTERDAY AND TODAY

144 The ancient Epirots were as distinct from the Hellenes as the Albanians are from the modern Greeks. The Greek writers of ancient times referred to them as a Pelasgic race, or, in other words, the descendants of the aboriginal inhabitants of the country.

The Pelasgian Zeus has his memory, even today, in their language, for we find the Albanian word for God is "Zoti." A minute's examination of the term "Gheg" and "Tosk" reveals that they are identical with "Truscus" or "Etruscus," while the form "Tyrrhenus" perhaps survives in Tirana, the capital of the Kingdom of Albania, as no other explanation for the derivation of the name of the city can be found.

618 These Pelasgians formed a cluster of rude,
619 rough, highland clans, very similar to those of the Highlanders of Scotland a hundred and fifty years ago, brave, illiterate and essentially barbarian in character. Oftimes these clans and tribes were banded together in an independent government of a tribal sort. They even went farther and coalesced into little
175 kingdoms of greater or lesser extent. In the times of the successor of Alexander the Great, Epirus made considerable progress in civilization, and its kings exerted no small degree

623 attention. These include the use of tribal lands, decisions whether or not to burn forest to make pasture, etc., although such matters usually involve several villages. The elders also convene as witnesses in oath-taking.

634 Above the village is the *bairak* (Turkish for banner, standard), a geographical area with some kind of natural unity, so that the people living in it habitually see more of each other than of those without. All of the village councils meet together for the *bairak* council, under the *bairaktar* (standard-bearer), or head of the *bairak* (fig. 10, *e*).[1] His office is hereditary in certain families. King Zog's father was *bairaktar* of Mat, the principal *bairak* of Mati; in Dibra Major Çen Eleze, who acted as host to our expedition, was one *bairaktar*, while Murat Kaloshi, his rival, was another. These men were great feudal leaders, maintaining large households of armed men, and dispensing [177] lavish hospitality to all comers. Çen Eleze had sent two of his sons to the American Technical School in Tirana, where they learned modern agricultural methods as well as perfect English. These boys, huge fellows over 6 feet 3, were of great help to us when we visited Slatina.

The *bairaktar* can become an independent sovereign if he has a strong enough personality and if the tribal authority is weak, and that of 619 the central government likewise. At other times he is under the authority of the head of the tribe, an official chosen from a ruling household, and bearing a different title in each tribe. In Mirdita he is called *Kapedan* (Captain); in Puka, *Shpij e Krye Ziut* (Black-Head House); in Malsia e Madhe, *Shpij e Madhe* (Big House), the exact equivalent of the ancient Egyptian *per āa*, or Pharaoh.

124 Fifty men, comprising 5 per cent of our
619 metrical series, were office-holders in the Gheg tribal system. Eleven[8] were elders, 26 chief

[8] Four from Dukagin, 2 Puka, 4 Mirdita, 1 Zadrima.

1 [see cat. 116, p. 110 -- Analyst]

elders,[4] 8 *bairaktars*,[5] and 5 retainers of a tribal prince, Jon Markajon of Mirdita (fig. 10, *a*). Except for the chief elder of Karashegeç in Has, who was a baker, all of the elders, chief elders, and *bairaktars* were farmers. The baker was "mayor" of a village of bakers, outside the mountain area. All of these men were locals, born of local fathers and mothers taken from within the father's tribe. Preferences are thus shown for (a) agriculture as against handicrafts or trade, and (b) local as against outside descent.

Jon Markajon, the only tribal chief whom we met, and who entertained us very well at his capital in Orosh, would not allow us to measure him, although he summoned all of his subjects from nearby villages. The 5 retainers whom we measured in his house constituted his princely staff. Three of them were part-time farmers, and 2, full-time political employees. What their exact duties and titles were, we did not determine. The ancient tribal government of Ghegnia, if we may judge by the example of Mirdita, the one tribe in which it survived more or less intact until 1929, consisted of a graded hierarchy with three steps—elders and their chief, *bairaktars*, and tribal prince. Attached to the prince was his staff of special messengers, chamberlains, and guards.

The tribal government was in the hands of the prince and his council, which consisted of all of the elders of the tribe, with their chief elders, and the *bairaktars*. The heads of large and powerful households, even if they held no formal office, would be included. The council met in cases of murder within the tribe, of intertribal warfare, invasion, or other crises involving violence. It also met to decide on its own composition, i.e., to hear the petitions of neighboring *bairaks* to join it.

The strength of the prince as compared to that of the council depended on the former's personality. During the last 50 years, for example, Mirdita has been ruled by the following princes: Bib Doda, a great and powerful man who died about 1913; Preng Bib Doda, his son, who was killed shortly after in a blood

[4] Nine from Malsia e Madhe, 1 Has, 4 Mirdita, 4 Zadrima, 3 Mati, and 1 Dibra.

[5] [see cat. 116, p. 110 -- Analyst]

619 643 feud; his cousin, Marka Gjoni, a weak character; his son, Jon Markajon, the incumbent in 1929, a man powerful enough to maintain the tribal system in defiance of the central government, to have his men exempted from military service and taxation, and to exact from Ahmed Zog an annual stipend in return for which he would keep his men quiet.

634 619 Each tribe in Ghegnia is an aggregation of *bairaks*. In 1929 we found 13 *bairaks* in Malsia e Madhe, 6 in Dukagin, 7 in Malsia e Jakovës, 2 in Has, 5 in Luma, 7 in Puka, 5 in Mirdita, one in Zadrima, 4 in Mati, 4 in Dibra, making 54 in all. The names of these, as recorded on our measurement blanks, are:

Malsia e Madhe: Klementi, Gruda, Hoti, Kastrati, Koplik, Greisha, Shkrelli, Riola, Reçi, Loya, Postripa, Triepsh, and Kraja.
Dukagin: Shoshi, Shala, Kiri, Dushman, Pulati, Toplana.
Malsia e Jakovës: Krasniqi, Gashi, Bituç, Marina, Vunshaj, Merturi, Nakaj.
Has: Vlana, Ershan.
Luma: Biçani, Kalishi, Ujmisht, Dolovisht, Çaja (Gorë, a Serbian-speaking *bairak*, is sometimes also counted with Luma).
Puka: Kabash, Puka, Çerç, Mal i Zi, Berisha, Buxhon, Iballja.
Mirdita: Dibri, Fan, Orosh, Speç, Kushnen.
Zadrima: Zadrima.
Mati: Mat, Lura, Kthella, Selita.
Dibra: Reçi, Stashani, Sheheri Poshtar, Sheheri Epert.

This list cannot be wrong in the cases of Puka and Mirdita, for the members of these tribes use the names *shtat bairaket* and *pes bairaket*, meaning *seven bairaks* and *five bairaks*, to designate their tribes. In Luma, Malsia e Jakovës, and Malsia e Madhe the picture is complicated by the presence of the Yugoslav-Albanian border, which not only cuts through *bairaks*, but has caused wholesale migrations and flights within the lifetimes of the subjects measured. Dozens of *fis* of a few households each have shifted about, and it is hard to tell to which *bairak* each belonged at the time the series was measured.

619 634 114 Miss Durham, who made her observations between 1908–13, some 20 years ahead of

[a] Three from Malsia e Madhe, 1 Malsia e Jakovës, 1 Puka, 1 Mirdita, 2 Dibra. All of these except the Mirdita man bore reserve titles.

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me, found the tribal rosters different in some areas from those I later encountered. She calls Malsia e Madhe not a tribe at all, but a confederation of tribes. Of these Klementi is given 4 *bairaks*, Seltzi, Vukli, Boga, and Nikshi, while the other 9, Gruda, Hoti, Skreli (Shkrelli), Klementi (Kilmeni), Lohe (Loya), Rechi (Reçi), Rioli (Riola), Kopliku, and Grizha (Greisha), are said to have consisted of a single *bairak* each. Triepsh and Kraja were not listed, doubtless because they lay over the Montenegrin border even before the imposition of the 1913 boundary. She did not include Postripa in the confederacy, but made it a separate group of tribes.

These were Mazreku, Drishti, Shlaku, Dushmani, and Summa. Only one of these, Dushmani, is given 2 *bairaks*, the others having one each. Dushman is the only one of these names which appears on my list, where it is given the status of a *bairak* of Dukagin. I measured in the village of Postripa itself, and am surprised that no subjects from these separate "tribes" appeared. What I was told was called Dukagin, she lists as "the Pulati group," dividing this into Upper and Lower Pulati. She grants Lower Pulati 4 small, one-*bairak* tribes: Plani, Ghoanni, Mgula, and Kiri. Upper Pulati is given Shala, with 4 *bairaks*, Thethi, Petsaj, Lothaj, and Lekaj; Shoshi, number of *bairaks* not stated; Toplana, same; Nikaj, same. Merturi, which intermarried with Nikaj and is now called part of Malsia e Jakovës, she listed with Puka as a part of Berisha. The reason for this was that "Merturi split off from Berisha eleven generations ago."[6]

Mal i Zi, listed in my roster as a *bairak* of Puka, she assigns to Luma. She makes Gashi, a *bairak* of Malsia e Jakovës, a separate tribe. She also grants tribal independence to the *bairak* of Lura, which she places at the head of a confederation including Mati and Dibra, and to Kthella, which she divides into 3 *bairaks*, Kthella, Selita, and Perlati.

1/1 [See Cat. 116, p 31 b. Analyst]

It is my impression that some of these differences are due to a confusion on Miss Durham's part between *fis* and *bairak*, *bairak* and tribe. On page 68 she translates *bairaktar* as "head of the tribe." Had she not gone wrong somewhere it would have been remarkable.

[6] Durham, 1928, p. 27.

619 634 114 Travel in Ghegnia in the years 1908–13 would not have been easy, even for an experienced man. For a woman to have made these journeys is something of a miracle. Others may be the result of the process of amalgamation, for many of the "tribes" which she mentions were miserable fragments of former populations decimated by warfare, and massacred, in some cases, by the Serbs. By 1929 a considerable realignment must have taken place in the whole area north of the Drin, and especially in the regions which she designates as Postripa and Pulati. In any case the 10 groups of people whom I have designated as tribes were so considered by the people with whom I worked in 1929, and form more or less self-contained, intermarrying units, sufficient for our present purpose.

619 628 Under the tribal system warfare was almost continuous. The underlying cause was of course population pressure. The overt causes were seduction, theft of women, elopement, cattle-stealing, and general raiding. It did not take much to give offense, particularly in the late winter, when food was scarce. Even a man who had almost enough to eat himself would be under severe tension, because of the general nervous strain of his kinsmen and dependents, and consequent maladjustment within the household.

522 A chance blow, a harsh word, even a play on words which is very easy in Shqip, or above all a cruel joke—these seemingly minor conflicts often led to gunplay and murder, with consequent feuding. I had several occasions to feel their Iron Age wit, so much like that of the Norse sagas. Once my host in Zadrima remarked, in front of many people, that I had the skinniest legs he had ever seen, and wondered how I could walk. The assembled company burst into Homeric roars. On another occasion, in a Puka *han*, I lifted my head suddenly and hit it a sound smack on a protruding nail, partially stunning myself in the process. This was the funniest thing in the world. Once again, when Farnsworth and I crawled into our sleeping bags for the night, the whole household laughed and laughed. When we asked what was the matter, they said, "Just think, if the house should catch on fire! You

8:Coon E-5 (1929-30;46-48)1950 EG1 Albania EG1
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521 wouldn't be able to get out of those sacks, Ha! Ha! Ha!"

628 682 619 What happens when a man kills another of the same tribe can best be learned from the following quotation from Miss Durham.[7]

Murder may be the result of a quarrel or it may be a blood-feud, the cause of which is more or less remote. In either case the man who has taken blood flies at once to a safe place outside the tribe. [Miss Durham is using "tribe" in the restricted sense, as before.] Any house is bound to give him hospitality. In the case of a feud, he is regarded as a most unfortunate man who has but done his duty. He at once proclaims his deed. The headmen of his tribe then meet and order his house to be burnt. Among the Dukagini the council has power also to destroy his crops, cut down his fruit trees, slaughter his beasts, and condemn the land to lie unworked for a term of years. An incredible amount of food-stuff is thus wasted. In this group not only the man who has taken blood, but all the males of his "house," are liable for blood, so they, too, have to fly. The "house" is the home maybe of a whole family community—forty people. But the law is carried out to the last letter. Such desolated spots have I seen. But "It is the Canon, so must be obeyed," was the answer to any remonstrance I made. The women and children may scatter and find shelter in other houses if they can; they usually do. A man can save his house if he can return to it and defend it three days successfully, so that the men sent by the council cannot set fire to it. I saw "a very brave man" in Berisha who had three times saved his house thus. Or a man can save his house by inviting the head of another mehala [household] to act as house lord and defend it with his own men. This might cause severe fighting. The council, to prevent this, then as a rule agrees to burn the house only and spare the property. The amount of property to be destroyed was always decided by the council. . . . In addition to the burning of the house, in all tribes a fine has to be paid. . . . in sheep or cattle. . . . to the Turkish Government. In the case of Maltsia e Madhe this was paid . . . in Scutari. . . . punctually . . . . The Turkish Government had a certain hold on all the nearer tribes, for it could hold as hostage any member of a tribe which owed blood-gelt and came to market at Scutari. The outlying tribes of Dukagini by no means always either notified or paid for their murders.

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Feuds being very weakening to a tribe, the headmen of the tribe or friends of the family would attempt to stop the feud. Blood-feuds of the Dukagini

[7] Durham, 1928, pp. 66-68.

[8] Miss Durham translated *bairaktar* as "head of the tribe." This explains her confusion between tribes and *bairaks* noted earlier.

and Pulati tribes are settled in the mountains; those of Maltsia e Madhe were settled in Scutari before the representatives of those tribes [to the Turkish Government] who lived there.

The peace-making is preceded by the "gjaksur" (he who owes blood) sending some friends to the "zoti i gjakut" (lord of blood) to ask for "besa" (promise of truce). This may be granted and further prolonged, and during the truce the gjaksur and his relatives are safe. To end the feud . . . twenty-four con-jurors are needed to swear the peace oath with the gjaksur. The plaintiff (lord of blood) has the right to name them. Or they may be named by the "bairaktar"* . . . . They examine the facts and decide if peace can be made and on what terms. If all twenty-four agree to take the peace oath with him he is then reckoned innocent, and he and his family do not owe any further blood, but pay blood gelt to the zoti i gjakut. This varied from about £25 to £50. . . .

Agreement having been come to, the whole party goes into the church (or mosque) before which the council has been held . . . and in the presence of the priest the gjaksur swears his innocence. He no longer owes blood. [After the others have all sworn] . . . the gjaksur and the zoti i gjakut frequently ratify the peace by swearing blood brotherhood. . . .

The oath being taken and the blood-gelt paid, the man is free to return to his burnt house and repair it. Being as a rule of solid stone, only the roof and woodwork need renewing. If he is a popular man, other members of the tribe help him both to pay the fine and start life again.*

Within the *bairak*, then, political mechanisms tended to reduce the frequency of murder by making it expensive. Murder between *bairaks* would likewise be discouraged if the central authority of the tribe were strong. Otherwise inter-*bairak* feuds could rage for decades before peacemaking. Whole tribes could likewise be in blood with each other, or with single *bairaks*, just as Mirdita was in blood with Lura during the period in which we are interested.

A central political authority tended to strengthen the ties between tribal members, and with the numerous council meetings that were called, members of the more prominent families got about frequently within their tribal boundaries. This would give them opportunity to arrange marriages some distance

* In this whole section I have used Miss Durham's spelling of local names, now obsolete. Also, I have left the definite article before *zoti i gjakut*, where it is grammatically superfluous.

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from home. The blood feud, on the other hand, scattered them even more widely, and while most of the exiles returned home, some settled outside the mountains. Miss Durham discovered around Jakova, about 1912, small villages made up of people from Fan and other

8:Coon E-5 (1929-30;46-48)1950 EG1 Albania EG1
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166 Mirdite *bairaks*, from Shala, Berisha, and other Gheg regions. Most of these exiles had probably left home involuntarily. The political framework of Gheg tribal society, particularly its warlike aspects, tends to promote emigration.